A Companion to Greek Religion

Edited by
Daniel Ogden

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A COMPANION TO GREEK RELIGION

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BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

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First published 2007 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

1 2007

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to Greek religion / edited by Daniel Ogden.
p. cm. — (Blackwell companions to the ancient world. Ancient history)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-2054-8 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 1-4051-2054-1 (hardcover : alk. paper) 1. Greece–Religion. I. Ogden, Daniel.

BL790.C66 2007
292.08–dc22

2006025008

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10/12pt Galliard
by SPi Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India
Printed and bound in Singapore
by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

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In memoriam

MICHAEL H. JAMESON

who had kindly agreed to participate in this volume

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The chapters by Pierre Bonnechere, Françoise Dunand, Madeleine Jost, Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, and Nicolas Richer have been translated by the editor.

Acknowledgments

The editor thanks all the contributors to this volume, and makes special acknowledgment of the assistance offered to the project by Jan Bremmer, James Davidson, Anton Powell, and Simon Price. Thanks are offered also to the Blackwell staff, in particular Al Bertrand, Angela Cohen, Sophie Gibson, and Janet Moth.

Note on Authors and Translations

The evidence base for the study of Greek religion is extremely diverse, and accordingly a wide range of ancient authors and inscriptions is cited in this volume. Those who seek further background information on the authors mentioned may turn in the first instance to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edn, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, Oxford, 1996). Unfortunately, the works of many of these authors still await translation into English, and this is true of the majority of the inscriptions cited. Translations of the more canonical authors, Greek or Latin, will be most conveniently found in the Loeb Classical Library series. Quotations from ancient authors in this volume are the contributors' own, except where otherwise indicated.

Abbreviations

ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (Berlin 1972–)
ARV	J.D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1963)
BGU	W. Schubart et al., eds, *Urkunden an den Königlichen (Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin: Griechische Urkunden* (Berlin, 1895)
BSAA	*Bulletin de la Société Archéologique d'Alexandrie*
Bull.	*Bulletin épigraphique*
D-K	H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn (Berlin, 1952)
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Leiden, 1923–)
FHG	C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 5 vols (Paris, 1841–70)
IEphesos	*Die Inschriften von Ephesos* (Bonn, 1979–)
IErythrai	*Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai* (Bonn, 1972–)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1912–)
IKnidos	*Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn, 1992–)
IMiletos	*Die Inschriften von Milet* (Berlin, 1997–)
IvPergamon	*Die Inschriften von Pergamon* (Berlin, 1890–)
JDAI	*Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts*
K-A	R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin, 1983)
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, 8 vols (Zurich, 1981–99)
LSAM	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1955)
LS(CG)	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris, 1969)
LSS	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques: Supplément* (Paris, 1962)
MAMA	*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* (Manchester 1928–)
M-L	R. Meiggs and D.M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1969)
NGSL	E. Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents* (Leiden, 2004)
OGIS	W. Dittenberger, *Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1903–5)
PMG	D.L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962)
P.Oxy.	*Oxyrhynchus papyri* (Oxford 1898–)
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll, eds, *Real-Encyclopädie der klassichen Altertumswissenschaft* (Munich and Stuttgart, 1893)
SB	F. Preisigke, *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten*, 2nd edn (Wiesbaden, 1963)

SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Leiden 1923–)
Syll.^{3}	W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, 3rd edn, 4 vols (Leipzig, 1915–24)
ThesCRA	*Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (Basle and Los Angeles, 2004–)
TrGF	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, and S. Radt, eds, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 5 vols (Göttingen, 1971–2004)
UPZ	U. Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1922–57)

Ancient Author Fragment Series Referred to by Editor's Name

Alcaeus	D.A. Campbell, ed., *Greek Lyric*, 5 vols. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1982–93)
	E.M. Voigt, ed., *Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta* (Amsterdam, 1971)
Archilochus	M.L. West, ed., *Iambi et elegi graeci*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford, 1989–92)
Aristippos	G. Giannantoni, ed., *Socratis et Socraticorum reliquiae* (Naples, 1990)
Aristotle	V. Rose, ed., *Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1886)
Cypria	A. Bernabé, *Poetarum epicorum graecorum testimonia et fragmenta*, I (Leipzig, 1987)
	M. Davies, *Epicorum graecorum fragmenta* (Göttingen, 1988).
Hesiod	R. Merkelbach and M.L. West, eds, *Fragmenta Hesiodea* (Oxford, 1967)
Lysias	U. Albini, ed., *Lysias. I discorsi* (Florence, 1955)
Pindar	H. Maehler and B. Snell, *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*, 5th/4th edn, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1971–5)
Plutarch	G.N. Bernardakis, ed., *Plutarchi Moralia*, 7 vols (Leipzig, 1888–96)
Sappho	E.M. Voigt, ed., *Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta* (Amsterdam, 1971)
Semonides	M.L. West, ed., *Iambi et elegi graeci*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford, 1989–92)
Simonides	M.L. West, ed., *Iambi et elegi graeci*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford, 1989–92)
Solon	M.L. West, ed., *Iambi et elegi graeci*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford, 1989–92)
Stesichorus	D.A. Campbell, ed., *Greek Lyric*, 5 vols, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1982–93)
	D.L. Page, ed., *Poetae melici graeci* (Oxford, 1962)
Theophrastus	W.W. Fortenbaugh, ed., *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence* (Leiden, 1992)
Xenophanes	H. Diels and W. Kranz eds, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 12th edn (Zurich, 1966)
	G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield, eds, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1983)

Introduction

Daniel Ogden

Gods overflowed like clothes from an over-filled drawer which no one felt obliged to tidy
(Robert Parker 2005:387)

Matters of religion are central to the things we hold most dear about the culture of the ancient Greek world. So it is with its literature, where we think first of Homer and tragedy, its art, where we think first of the statues of the gods and the mythical scenes of the vases, and its architecture, where we think first of temples. But beyond this, there was no sphere of life (or death) in ancient Greece that was wholly separate or separable from the religious: the family, politics, warfare, sport, knowledge . . . The task of designing a companion volume to Greek religion, even one of the substantial length of this one, is accordingly formidable. Comprehensiveness is impossible. Indeed, it is impossible even to define in an uncontroversial way the ground one might aspire to cover comprehensively. Defending himself for directing *Lear* for the third time, Jonathan Miller likened the play to a "vast dark continent" that one could never hope to explore fully. All one could do was sail around it, disembark at different points, and make narrow treks through the jungle ahead. The chapters of this volume constitute such narrow treks into the vast continent of Greek religion. They cannot, between them, render the territory fully and minutely mapped, but they may offer the reader an impression of the land's size, layout, and diversity. They may indicate the areas that call for closer or further investigation. And the notes made of the flora and fauna encountered along the way will certainly intrigue.

The volume's basic purview is the Greek-speaking world in the archaic, classical, and hellenistic periods (i.e. 776–30 BC), although the "bookends" fall outside these parameters: an initial chapter contextualizes Greek religion within the wider family of Near Eastern religions and there is a final chapter on reception. The selection of topics offered has not been determined by any strong intellectual agenda. Rather, as befits a companion volume, the chapters seek to reflect the subjects and issues generally held to be of importance and interest by contemporary international experts in the field of Greek religion. However, one theme the reader will find to recur in several parts of the volume (and especially Part V) is that of the disaggregation of the term "Greek religion." Whilst a certain degree of across-the-board generalization is not only unavoidable but actually desirable in a Companion, there has also been some attempt

to approach the distinctiveness of the religious experiences of individuals or of local communities within the Greek world.

The subject of myth, whilst not addressed head-on here (see Ken Dowden's forthcoming *Companion to Classical Myth* in the same series), nonetheless pervades the volume. It has been felt too restrictive to devote a focal chapter to each of the Olympian pantheon (however defined), but care has been taken to include substantial discussions of many of the major deities. Thus discussions of Zeus can be found in Chapters 3 and 17, Apollo in Chapters 3 and 9, Athena in Chapters 14 and 26, Demeter and Persephone in Chapters 19 and 22, Dionysus in Chapters 19 and 21, Artemis in Chapter 3, Aphrodite in Chapter 20, Hades in Chapter 5, and Asclepius in Chapter 10.

Scott Noegel (Chapter 1) opens the volume with a synoptic study situating Greek religion in the long context of the religions of the ancient Near East. The question of whether, when, and how the various religions of the Near East may have influenced the form and development of Greek religion is fraught with definitional and other methodological complexities. There are prima facie cases for tracing a number of lines of influence between Asiatic myths and Greek ones: the cosmogonies, the myths of world deluge, and those of battle between god and chaos-dragon. However, since the general relationship, if any, between myth and cult in the Near Eastern societies and Greece alike remains obscure, it is impossible to read shared religious practices directly out of such correspondences. A number of vehicles of transmission of religious culture between east and west may be identified, including trade, war, migration, foreign employment, religious festivals, and diplomacy. Already in the Mycenaean period Greeks were in vigorous contact with Crete, Egypt, Syro-Canaan (note that the Philistines are likely to have been Greek settlers) and Anatolia, and peoples from all around the eastern Mediterranean mingled in Cyprus at this time. In the eighth and seventh centuries BC peripatetic religious artisans may have disseminated technologies across the eastern Mediterranean. When the Greeks did borrow an institution, a god, or a rite, and install it in their own religious system, it is seldom clear how they read the role and meaning of the institution borrowed, which, in any case, were inevitably transformed radically in their new context. On what basis did the Greeks decide to equate a particular god from a religious system structured so differently from their own with a familiar figure from their pantheon?

The next group of chapters (Part II) addresses the supernatural personnel of Greek religion, the gods, great and small, and the dead, great and small. **Ken Dowden** (Chapter 2) asks how the Greeks constructed their suite of Olympian gods in various intersecting contexts and media. For all their anthropomorphism, the gods were characteristically remote and seldom presented themselves to mankind in direct, visible, or scrutable form. They were constructed through the dimensions of local cult worship, of myth and its refractions in poetry and art, and of theological and philosophical reflection (cf. Part VIII). In visiting the great temple of Zeus at Olympia one would experience the god repeatedly through all these dimensions. Poets had probably taken the central role in establishing a common theogony amongst the Greeks in the dark ages. The canonical number of Olympian gods was twelve, but the number of important gods commonly held to dwell on the mountain was significantly larger. Various attempts to define a pantheon of twelve can be traced from the Homeric poems onwards, and it was often conceived of in terms of a series

of pairs of gods. The western tradition's reception of the Olympian gods has inevitably been formed by the great poetical works bequeathed to us from antiquity, such as, Homer apart, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Such works have promoted a simple conception of each of the gods in which they are strongly associated with a primary function ("the god of . . . ") and with a limited range of mythical tales. But when we look at use of the gods on the ground, as it were, complex and diverse histories and profiles emerge for them, at both local and panhellenic level alike, as can be seen from case studies of Apollo and Artemis.

Jennifer Larson (Chapter 3) explains that the concept of "nature deities," which we might casually use, is an unsatisfactory one. But the notion of minor deities resident in and intimately associated with local landscapes was one of huge significance for the people of ancient Greece, its peasantry in particular. It is rewarding to learn that, at least in some cases, the inherent aesthetic beauty of some places, remote spots, or partly wild gardens, has to be considered a factor in their recognition and cultivation as sacred. Such pleasant places were regarded as the abodes of nymphs. Caves of nymphs with their associated gardens were seldom sponsored by cities. More typically, they would be maintained either by individuals "seized" by the nymphs, "nympholepts," or by families visiting from the immediate environs. Those who worked in the countryside, such as shepherds, would often have a particularly close affinity with the local nymphs. Commonly associated with nymphs was cheerful, noisy Pan, protector of goats and shepherds. He was a temple-based deity in his native Arcadia, but as his cult spread beyond in the fifth century he was put to live with the nymphs in their caves. Similarly, local populations could be devoted to their adjacent rivers, those vital engines of fertility, establish waterside shrines for them, and project them into myth as founding kings of their communities. Those deities based in the natural world but equally accessible to all in the wider Greek world, the Earth, the Sun, the Sea, and the winds, were accordingly more widely worshiped.

Emma Stafford (Chapter 4) offers a review of the developing trends in the personification of abstract entities as humanoid deities. The epic poetry of the archaic period provided a "basic mythological pedigree" for a number of personified figures later destined to achieve full cult status. It is often hard to judge how seriously any given personification should be taken in the ca. seventh-century poetry of Hesiod or Homer. Hesiod gives us a great many "genealogical" personifications (and in this he may well exhibit the influence of the religions of the Near East), but did these personifications enjoy any currency in Greek religious life beyond the poem itself? The Homeric poems often like to exploit the ambiguity between abstraction and personification: just how substantial, how anthropomorphic, is Fear when it (or he) stalks the battlefield? We can be more confident about Sleep, who receives significant attention and elaboration in both poets. In later periods Sleep and Terror alike became the recipients of actual cults. From ca. 600 BC the figure of Youth, wife of Heracles, becomes prominent in art and is associated with the cults of other deities. The sanctuary of Nemesis and Themis ("Righteous Anger" and "Divine Law") at Rhamnous, which seems to have originated in the early sixth century, is of particular interest because here we already have a major sanctuary focally dedicated to personified deities. In the classical period personifications (not all of them divine) were frequently given life, character, and substance on the Attic stage, and a broad range of personifications is to be found on Attic pots of the same period. The fifth century

witnessed the development of important cults for a number of personifications, but, in contrast with the Rhamnous sanctuary, these were all associated with the cults of established deities. Persuasion was normally associated with Aphrodite, Fair Fame with Artemis, and Health with Asclepius. The fourth century witnessed a significant expansion in the cults of a number of political personifications, such as Peace, Democracy, Good Fortune, and Concord, the spread of whose cult it is possible to document in detail.

D. Felton (Chapter 5) looks at the dead. She notes the great importance that the Greeks in all periods placed upon the honoring of the dead, and the remarkable consistency they displayed in their modes of honoring, despite the widely varying beliefs they entertained about the nature of death and the afterlife. The dead were continually reverenced and appeased at family and state level. The principal Athenian festivals devoted to these matters were the Genesia (reverence) and Anthesteria (appeasement), the beliefs surrounding the latter partly coinciding with those surrounding the modern western Halloween. In their new underworld home the dead encountered a range of deities, some resident in the world below, others moving between it and the world above. The Hades who ruled the underworld was a somewhat evanescent god, with relatively little cult, myth, or iconography of his own. Ideas about the organization and the internal topography of the underworld – and the corresponding eschatological significance of these things – varied greatly, although the notion that a river crucially separated the dead from the living remained enduringly popular. There was, in the Greek imagination, a possibility of travel between the two realms in extreme cases. Exceptional heroes penetrated into and returned from the underworld in life: Heracles, Theseus, and Orpheus managed to do this for different reasons. And the dead could be called back to the realm of the living through necromantic practices, or could return spontaneously, particularly if they had died before their time, or by violence, or if they remained unburied. In these cases they would typically return to exact vengeance from their killer, or to demand due rites of burial. Such themes are addressed in the highly entertaining ghost stories the ancient world has bequeathed to us.

Gunnel Ekroth (Chapter 6) looks at the heroes. These very much constituted an intermediary category between the gods and the dead, sharing important qualities with both alike, and in some senses oscillating between the two. Hero shrines connected to epic or mythic heroes seem to have become prominent in the eighth century BC, and it is in this century too that offerings at Mycenaean tombs seem to have become popular. The rise of the city-state and the establishment of oikist cults by colonists may have been a spur to such activity. Heroes (men, women, or even children) could be produced from a number of sources: from the tales of myth or epic; from former gods or goddesses cut down to size to fit into new religious systems; from historical or quasi-historical figures, particularly those associated with extreme actions, for good or ill, or with extreme or violent deaths, including those in war. It is no longer thought that heroes typically received holocaust-sacrifices. Rather, they typically received sacrifices similar to those given to the gods, with whom they could play a similar role in the religious system. These were *thysia*-sacrifices in which meat was distributed to the participants, and *theoxenia*-offerings, tables of vegetable dishes akin to those consumed by the living, and designed to encourage the recipients to come close to their worshipers. Dedications of blood were largely reserved for

heroes associated with a martial context. The sites and shrines at which heroes were worshiped were so diverse in their physical types, overlapped to such a degree with other varieties of monument, and were so informed by local conventions that we depend upon literary or epigraphic evidence to identify them securely. Because of the way in which heroes were strongly rooted in local areas, they could function as valuable expressions of local identity, and the possession of the body of a particular hero could advance a community's claim to precedence over its neighbors. Hence it was not uncommon for a hero's bones to be transferred between territories, or for their location to be kept secret, to protect them from theft. But sometimes a hero could be appropriated merely through the elaboration of a new version of his myth.

We turn then, in Part III, to the mechanisms of communicating with the divine, moving from regular verbal communication by means of prayer and hymn, through symbolic and ritualized communication by means of sacrifice, to the more focused and interactive variety of communication found in divination. **William D. Furley** (Chapter 7) discusses prayers and hymns, the means by which the Greeks attempted to communicate with the divine through the voice. The silent, meditative variety of prayer familiar from contemporary Christian practice was unknown to the Greeks, for whom prayer more typically took place in the context of public performance. Indeed, it is possible to conceptualize sacrificial procedure as constituting a ritual framework for a multi-media prayer. Greek prayers traditionally had a tripartite structure of invocation–argument–prayer (proper). The argument sections, which sought to persuade the god that the petitioner deserved his help, often reminded the god of sacrifices he had previously made, or used an "advent myth" of the god's arrival to crystallize the notion of his current attendance in the mind of worshipers. Prayers could also be classified on the basis of the standing the petitioner perceived himself to be in with the god: if one had already deserved well of the god, one used a *euchē*; if one had no existing claim to his favor, one used a *hiketeia*, or "supplication." For the most part prayers were spoken and hymns were sung, but hymns were also designed to please and entertain the god with their artistic beauty, and formed part of a reciprocal *charis* between man and god. Within the types of hymn a broad distinction may be made between dactylic-hexameter *prooimia*, third-person narratives of the god's deeds, which could be used to introduce performances, and lyric, second-person addresses to the god, used in cultic contexts.

Jan N. Bremmer (Chapter 8) looks at sacrifice. He begins by outlining the details of the normative process as laid out by Homer, and then contextualizes these against later evidence, especially that from classical Athens, in which the various aspects of sacrificial practice were more heavily dramatized. The most popular sacrificial victims were adult sheep and goats, cheaper than full-grown cows or pigs. Sometimes the age, sex, and color of the victim could be significant, and perfection of form always was. The kill itself was accompanied by a tension-breaking cry of joy from the women present. The dead animal was carved up, and attention was directed first to the parts to be given to the god, the thigh-bones wrapped in fat, or parts of the innards. Then meat was distributed, after cooking, to the mortals present: the notion that all human participants shared in the meat equally was honored more at the ideological level than at the practical one. The principal modern interpretations of ancient sacrifice are critiqued: Meuli's view that sacrifice was essentially ritual slaughter, Burkert's that the shared aggression of sacrificial killing bonded communities, and Vernant's

that sacrifice was killing to eat. All have merits, but are ultimately too reductive in their treatment of this polyvalent ritual at the center of Greek society. The significance that, above all, should not be omitted from our understanding of the institution is that which the Greeks themselves gave to it: communication with the gods. In origin, it seems, the Greeks had imagined the gods to be literally sharing in the post-sacrificial banquet with them. Their explicit remarks and implicit indications make it clear that for them sacrifice served the tripartite purpose of honoring the gods, expressing gratitude to them, and appealing to them for things needed. The myths of Prometheus and Deucalion show that for the Greeks sacrifice ordered the correct relationship between man and his gods.

Pierre Bonnechere (Chapter 9) investigates the complex subject of divination. He sets the practice against the context of the pervasive contact and communication the Greeks felt that they had with the gods in all aspects of their lives. It cannot be doubted that the Greeks did in general believe in the power of their oracles, but they had three obstacles to contend with. The first was ambiguity: oracles had to be held to be ambiguous to bridge the gap between the assumption of divine infallibility and ostensible errors made. An interesting outgrowth of oracular ambiguity was the refinement of indirect forms of question by the consulters in order to parry it. The second obstacle was the problem of charlatanism: where did the credibility of the form of divination one happened to be employing lie, on the scale that stretched from the great oracle of Delphi to the unimpressive and hucksterish itinerant diviners? And the third was the vigorous manufacture of false, largely *post eventum* oracles, which, however, remain interesting for us for what they can tell us about the way in which the oracular sanctuaries were projected. The major distinction between "inductive divination" and "inspired divination" is explained. In inductive divination, properly the preserve of the *mantis*, messages from the gods are read out of the world around, in the form of such things as prodigies, celestial phenomena, the behavior of birds, the involuntary spasms of the human body, double entendres, and the inspection of sacrificial innards. In inspired divination the gods speak directly to or through individuals, and this type of divination is principally associated with the sanctuaries and prophets. Much inspirational divination took the form of dreams, whether spontaneous or sought out in an incubation sanctuary, such as that of a healing hero. It could also take the form of "enthusiasm," in which a medium or sometimes the consulter himself gained access to the god through a modified state of consciousness, to which he had been helped by some preliminary ordeals. The inspiration-led sanctuaries included Delphi, Dodona, Claros, Didyma, and that of Trophonius, and we know quite a lot about the elaborate consultation rituals used at some of these.

The next group of chapters (Part IV) charts the continuum from sacred space to sacred time, moving from fixed sanctuaries and the more mobile notion of pollution through to the festivals that were defined by space and time, and on to the sacred significance of time itself. **Beate Dignas** (Chapter 10) recreates a day in the life of a Greek sanctuary, a surprisingly difficult task, since sanctuaries were generally more interested in recording regulations for special festival days rather than for the daily routine. Many smaller sanctuaries will have been closed most of the year, or at any rate will seldom have had their priest on site, a local caretaker supervising them at other times and, as appropriate, making arrangements for occasional visitors to pray,

sacrifice, offer votives, or just "share in the beauty and awe of the sacred place." The best-documented sanctuaries, although not necessarily the most typical, are the big healing sanctuaries dedicated to Asclepius and his avatars. This is not simply a function of their importance but also of the fact that they had to devote so much attention to the supervision of their visitors and the management of their needs. A significant record of the most important aspect of the "daily life" that unfolded in the healing sanctuaries is afforded by the many surviving votives, which were displayed either in the temple, in its treasury, or in the open. These most typically consisted of models of the body-part healed, but reliefs and verbal accounts, both of which can be highly vivid, are also found. Inscribed regulations make it clear that sanctuaries could often become embarrassingly cluttered with the votives, which, once given, could not leave the sanctuary. Sometimes their accumulation could even obscure the cult image from view. Older ones could be buried, and metal ones melted down for reuse. The priests had the ultimate say over the organization of the displays of votives, and sometimes liked to group together those given in their own term of office. The experience of being a visitor to one of these sanctuaries is perhaps most immediately conveyed by Herodas' poetic description of a visit to an Asclepieion by two women. We hear how they progress through the sanctuary, which is seemingly open to all visitors, make their offering, admire the displayed votives, and have a friendly chat with the caretaker. Some larger sanctuaries could be the principal source of employment, direct or indirect, in their local community, as Pausanias observed. Sick people and their attendants, who might lodge in the sanctuaries for an extended period, would need all the provisions of the market, and these would come to them, with some sanctuaries even leasing out shops within their precincts.

Andreas Bendlin (Chapter 11) investigates the – for us – slippery notions of purity and pollution in ancient Greece. Purity and pollution were not simple opposites of each other, but rather they were both alike opposites of a condition of normality. Purity was a quality of the sacred realm. Pollution occurred beyond its boundaries in the realm of men. Ancient ideas of *ritual* pollution only coincided with ancient ideas of *pathogenic* pollution to a very limited degree. The usual sources of ritual pollution included childbirth, miscarriage, abortion, menstruation, sex (licit or illicit), the eating of some animal products, corpses, and killing. It resulted, accordingly, from abnormal human actions and normal, unavoidable ones alike. The regulations for managing such pollution varied widely from region to region and city to city. The old structuralist belief that ideas of purity and pollution acted as a mechanism of social control leaves much unexplained: it does not, for example, account particularly well for the management of relations between the sexes. It may account rather better for the management of killing: it is obviously desirable that murderers be excluded from their communities. And since the concept of pollution happily entailed also the concept of purification, it offered the possibility of the making of amends and the sometimes useful prospect of the killer's eventual reintegration into his community. One of the most challenging aspects of ancient ideas of pollution for us to come to terms with is the seemingly casual, arbitrary, and unsystematic fashion in which this kind of thinking could be invoked and then abandoned. Few ancients are likely to have gone about their business in a constant state of dread about incurring pollution. More often, a source of pollution, perhaps indirect, would be identified after the fact – after, that is, something had gone awry. A murderer was not ipso facto polluted by the

deed of murder: it was only when public proclamation of his pollutedness was made that this condition came into existence. Indeed, it is almost a premise of the Greek cities' annual purifying scapegoat rituals that a city should accumulate numerous overlooked acts of pollution in the course of a year.

Local festivals would be held at a more or less fixed time within the year; they would draw in people from far around, and their central event was normally a sacrifice with an ensuing feast. **Scott Scullion** (Chapter 12) deploys three case studies to illustrate the difficulties ancient, medieval, and modern scholars alike have had in trying to divine the meanings of festivals, and suggests that, so far as the majority of ancient participants was concerned, we may all have been looking for their meaning in the wrong place. The case of the Athenian Diasia, the festival of Zeus Meilichios, illustrates, amongst other things, the way our dossier of fragmentary evidence for a festival can be compromised by the misunderstandings and anachronistic inferences of the later commentators and lexicographers of the classical tradition, upon whom we depend for much of the evidence's preservation. The case of the Spartan Karneia illustrates how modern conceptions of the significance of festivals have changed repeatedly over the last century, as different methodological approaches have come into and gone out of fashion, each one emphasizing those parts of the catalog of evidence for each festival with a resonance for their own theories. Was the Karneia an expression of guilt and atonement? Was it an initiation rite? Or something else again? The case of the Athenian Oschophoria illustrates the aetiological approach typically taken by the poets and scholars of antiquity to the explanation of their festivals. They tended to conceptualize festivals as commemorative of key events in the mythical past and to develop elaborate – but not necessarily stable – narratives about these events. These "commemorative" aetiologies typically focus on those elements of a festival's rituals that are most unsettling, such as transvestism in the case of the Oschophoria, and attempt to explain them away. However, it is unlikely that much of the aetiological material that survives had any official status at the festivals themselves, and it is also unlikely that many of the participants in the festivals had any strong grasp of it. It is more illuminating to ask, rather, what, for the average participant, the festival experience was all about. Ancient descriptions of the popular experience of participation in festivals focus on the themes of "relaxation, jollification, and entertainment," the latter provided by parades and competitions of drama, singing, and dancing. The light-hearted Aristophanes and the grimmer Thucydides agree on this. For most participants the significance of a festival will not have lain in its unique and arcane features, but rather in the features that it shared with all other festivals.

James Davidson (Chapter 13) investigates the way in which ancient Greek religion was deeply structured and informed by processes, sequences, and series: in short, by time. Cycles of the moon were critically important in determining the timing of festivals, which were kept at the appropriate point of the solar year by careful intercalation. The different cities all had their own calendars, but, despite their independent spirits and rivalries, they contrived to keep their calendars remarkably well synchronized, and this fact constitutes one of our strongest licenses to speak of an "ancient Greek religion." Although the Sun (Helios) was a marginal deity in the Greek religious systems, he was one of the most ancient ones, and a deity the other gods were reluctant to meddle with. Star myths ("asterisms") linked heroes and heroines to fixed points within the solar year. The apparent disappearance of stars

beneath the earth in the course of their cycles, and their clear reflection in the still lagoons associated with underworld entrances, led to a paradoxical association between stars and the underworld. In the *Odyssey* Orion is already found in the world below. In this way, stars formed perfect avatars for heroes and heroines, caught between the worlds of immortality and mortality, and allowed them to make spectacular, natural appearances or disappearances at the appropriate times. The numbering of days in the month reflected the moon's waxing and waning structure. Religious activities tended to be concentrated in the earlier part of the month, with the first day being held particularly important. The earlier dates of the month also tended to be sacred to individual gods. These dates inevitably tended to attract their annual festivals, and the date number could structure or reflect the structure of other aspects of their representation and the mythology associated with them. The Greeks sometimes mapped their ritual processes onto imagined mythistorical narratives. Thus the ban on bread on the first day of the Spartan Hyacinthia ceremonially evoked a primordial time when bread had not yet been invented. Myths of Dionysus' arrival project onto the historical level an essential quality of his divine personality, that of being the adventitious god. The Greeks imagined the reign of Zeus not as an unchanging, eternal given, but as a midpoint in a narrative: before Zeus there had been Cronus, and in the future there would be another regime again, headed by a figure akin to Achilles. The Greek cities were age-class societies, and human progression through the age-classes could be mapped onto other varieties of time and process, such as the yearly cycle. In Athens the year sets of adults aged between 18 and 60 each carried a patron hero, with the "retiring" set relinquishing its hero to the newest. The tombs of these (largely obscure) heroes may have formed a sort of "generational clock" around the circuit of the city wall. The 42-year "generation" period structured some important events in Athenian history, such as the reincarnation of the Acropolis.

Our next chapters (Part V) explore the very different shapes into which "Greek religion" could be configured through discrete analyses of the contrasting religious systems of four separate places. The cities of Athens, Sparta, and Alexandria are chosen for their general importance and for the manifest and extreme differences in their social organization and development. Arcadia is chosen for a fourth study as a religious environment functioning outside the framework of the polis. **Susan Deacy** (Chapter 14) takes on the difficult task of analyzing Athens, and asks how the Athenians balanced the notion that they managed a stable religious system with constant innovation. As a massive city by classical Greek standards, Athens had a massive pantheon of its own to match, consisting of the familiar Olympians, personified abstractions, and heroes and heroines. The patron Athena held a presiding place in the complex religious life of the city. She was literally central to it, her major sanctuary towering over the city centre, as opposed to being located at an external site as was often the case with ancient Greek poleis, and she was symbolic too of the supposedly Thesean synoecism of Attica. The tendency to centralize the religion of the polis under Athena is clearly seen in her appropriation of the "sacred things" of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which had once been controlled by the independent polis of Eleusis. The "Athenian foundation myth," enshrined in the topography of the Acropolis, established Athena's presiding relationship over the other gods and heroes there and represented her as the chosen mother of the Athenian people. The

Erechtheum, anomalously by the standards of Greek temples, drew together a diversity of cults under Athena's patronage. It was above all in the context of Athena's great civic festival, the Panathenaea, that the Athenians celebrated their communality. But as Athens rose to power in the Greek world it was through Athena's great festival above all that the city projected its image to that world. Major events in the city's history were symbolically incorporated into the festival – a trireme after Salamis, and the participation of the "allies" as Athens established her empire. And major events in Athenian political historical typically implicated the goddess, as in the tyrant Pisistratus' triumphant return: he was able to unite the people of Athens behind him through the conceit that he was being escorted back by the goddess in person.

Nicolas Richer (Chapter 15) looks at the religious system of Sparta, a city renowned in antiquity for its scrupulous devotion to the gods. There the gods presided over human life in its entirety: they helped in the rearing of children, male and female, and they managed transitions to adulthood, in the context of both the brutal initiation ceremonies in the sanctuary of Orthia and initiatory homosexual relationships. Amongst the city's cults the oldest seem to have belonged to Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, all of whom are mentioned in the Great Rhetra. The kings owed their special position and privileges not least to their role as mediators between gods and the community, in peace and especially during war, when they presided over a sophisticated religious technology of warfare on the army's behalf. The Spartans led their lives emmeshed in religious structures of both spatial and temporal dimensions. The central city itself and the wider territory of Laconia alike were protected by rings of shrines and tombs, with key gods often occupying sanctuaries both at the center and at the periphery. The religious calendar ordered the Spartans' lives with both regular and movable feasts. Religion was heavily exploited in the inculcation of the discipline for which Spartan society was famous: the bodily passions that had to be kept under control were abstracted and sacralized. Spartan beliefs in this area may have exercised a significant influence over Plato's thinking on the passions. Living Spartans were, furthermore, protected and encouraged by the dead, who were meticulously stratified into categories and ranked in accordance with the benefits, martial and other, they had conferred upon Sparta during life or could continue to confer in death. Richer appropriately concludes that the great awe the Spartans displayed towards their gods seems to have been a motor of their history.

Françoise Dunand (Chapter 16) reviews the religious system of Alexandria. For all this city's greatness and importance, evidence for religious life there is scarce: only a tiny amount of the city's literature survives by comparison with that of the heydays of Athens or Rome; its archaeology has been destroyed by two millennia of continuous occupation; and the papyri are less helpful than they are for other Greco-Egyptian topics. And so it is difficult to chart the progress of the city's religious system from blank piece of paper upon foundation in 331 BC to the "palimpsest" it had become in late antiquity. Most cults will have been started spontaneously by groups of Greek immigrants. Amongst the cults of the traditional Greek gods those that came to particular prominence were the ones belonging to Zeus, to Demeter (Eleusinian Mysteries may even have been performed for her), to Dionysus (whose image the kings liked to appropriate), and to Aphrodite (a favorite of the queens). Egyptian gods were repackaged for the city's Greek masters. Isis was already known in mainland Greece before Alexander's campaign, and it may indeed have been he that

founded her cult in the city, where her temples soon proliferated. New imagery and attributes were developed for her interaction with her new Greek consumers, amongst whom women may have predominated. Sarapis too, despite the elaborate myths of his origin, was a native Egyptian god, Osiris-Apis, and his existence is attested prior to Alexander's arrival. But he was appropriated from Memphis by Ptolemy Soter and radically redesigned for a role in the new city: a religious innovation of enormous success, given its artificiality. He was brought to serve as Alexandria's protector-god (all Greek cities had to have one), but he was identified, appropriately, with Hades and, a little less appropriately, with Asclepius. Ptolemy III built him the magnificent Sarapieion, the dramatic destruction of which, in AD 392, came to symbolize the end of paganism in Egypt, and indeed further afield. As a pair Sarapis and Isis came to serve as a divine projection of the royal couple, with whom they were often associated. Alexandria was distinguished from the other cities considered here not least by its dynastic cult, which grew by increments out of a cult for Alexander, whose body Ptolemy I had secured for the city, and into which dead Ptolemies were soon incorporated. In the midst of all this Alexandria's important Jewish population seems to have been left to practice its religion in freedom, and possibly even with a degree of moral support from the throne. It was the Ptolemies, after all, who commissioned the Septuagint and who, in Alexandria, presided over the rapprochement between Jewish and Greek culture that permitted the emergence of Christianity.

Finally in our review of different religious systems, **Madeleine Jost** (Chapter 17) analyzes the initially less heavily centralized, wild, and pastoral, but reputedly pious, land of Arcadia. There are, she contends, two ways in which one can speak meaningfully of an "Arcadian religious system." First, we can look to the existence of distinctively Arcadian deities worshiped throughout the region. In fact there were three "pan-Arcadian" deities that structured the religion of the region as a whole. Two were the goat-god Pan and Zeus Lykaios, who were adopted as federal symbols when the Arcadians formed themselves into a league, the latter despite his associations with human sacrifice. A third was Despoina, whose worshipers celebrated her orgiastic rites in animal costumes, and whose sanctuary at Lykosoura enjoyed an importance that far outstripped that of its local city, receiving honor from all over Arcadia. These deities were distinctively characterized by wildness and animalian aspects. We can also look to the distinctive structuring of the local pantheons of the Arcadian cities, and in particular to the valuable information that can be gleaned from the epithets applied to the gods in these pantheons. These epithets, whilst often familiar from elsewhere in Greece, could sometimes be interpreted in a distinctively Arcadian fashion. Some epithets intriguingly preserve the memories of lost local deities. Others celebrated the preoccupations that chiefly concerned this rustic society, and related to agricultural and pastoral activities. Secondly, we can look to Arcadian mythology for distinctive tales rooted in the land of Arcadia itself. An Arcadian religious identity is proclaimed in particular by the myths of animal transformation, such as that of Lykaon into a wolf, and those of Demeter and Poseidon into horses (myths which should not be taken to document an "animal phase" in the history of Arcadian religion). For gods, such transformations represented their intimate connections with the animal world; for men, they represented the regression to the animal state that ensues when the institutions of civilization are flouted.

The following chapters (Part VI) look at the role of religion in structuring or reflecting the structure of society in ancient Greece, moving from relationships between the largest social groupings through relationships within the family and down to sexual relationships between individuals. But in fact the goddess who presided over sexual cohesion between individuals was also, by analogy, asked to preside over the social cohesion of the wider state. **Charles W. Hedrick Jr.** asks to what extent religion should be understood to have cohered with, reflected, or reinforced social structure in classical Athens. He concludes that general coherence of religion with the political order was manifest, but that religious observance also provided ample scope for conflict as well. From at least the time of Xenophanes the Greeks had begun to perceive religion as a separable entity, and this notion came to flourish with the Sophists. The isolation of religion allowed men to imagine an area in which people could "make their world" and paved the way to the development of political thought. Despite this, in classical Athens most religious observance was "civic," that is to say, the constitution of the various worshiping groups often coincided with the organization of the political order, their religious activities encouraging community solidarity. Thus, in the performances of the Dionysia, the audience was seated in accordance with its civic categories. Religious rites of transition articulated the progression of the young through their changing civic statuses. Women could sometimes achieve a degree of autonomy in the religious sphere distinct from their position in the political sphere: cults of goddesses tended to rest in the hands of priestesses, and women could enjoy festivals, such as the Thesmophoria, and other varieties of worship, exclusive of men. In the Kronia the distinction in status between free and slave was advertised through the mechanism of its temporary inversion. Whereas classical Athens could legitimately boast to be a classless society from the political perspective, high birth and wealth did continue to offer some religious privileges, with certain priesthoods and roles being reserved for the well born or rich. The different demes of Attica, the basic units of the democratic organization, were all distinguished by their own cults and calendars of festivals, and these could sometimes pose a threat to the unity of the umbrella state, to such an extent that some cults were reduplicated in both the city center and the outlying regions. While citizenship of the Athenian state legally seems to have depended upon deme membership, access to deme membership was effectively controlled by the phratries or "brotherhoods," which were predominantly religious associations. Family allegiance could always constitute a threat to the political order, and so family-based cults or religious observances could be particularly problematic for the state: hence the state's particular anxiety about the destructive potential of women's lamentation at funerals.

Janett Morgan (Chapter 19) investigates the relationships between women, religion, and the home. In classical Athenian ideology citizen men were strongly associated with the open, visible space of the city, whereas their wives were associated with the closed, invisible space of the home, which their presence to some extent defined. The home was normally a place of protection for them and a place that the women themselves sought to protect with their rites. But it could also become a stage for their domestic rituals. A striking example of this is the Adonia festival, the rites of which were performed noisily on the roof of the house. Sexual imagery could identify women with the house in which they lived, and in particular with the hearth that

formed the symbolic heart of the house. The hearth became emblematic of the family's fertility and continuity, with new brides being introduced to it, and new babies being symbolically carried around it. Festivals associated with Demeter and Dionysus drew women out of their houses and brought them into the visible, political space of the city, temporarily dissolving the critical boundary between the city and the home. The traditional order of the city was renewed and restored as the women returned to their houses. Women presided over the harmony-restoring rites associated with disruptive changes to the composition of the family: birth, marriage, and death. But these changes concerned the state too, and so on these occasions the women again had to become visible as they moved out into the public sphere with their rituals. Women's rites often formed them into protective circles around the vulnerable individuals in the process of transition, the corpse of the dead person on his way to Hades, the newly arriving bride, and the newborn baby.

Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge (Chapter 20) explores the intersection between religion and sex. "Sexuality" is a modern concept that can only be applied anachronistically to ancient society. To circumvent this problem, the study is targeted upon two intimately related Greek terms: *aphrodisia* and Aphrodite herself. It can be shown that a series of ostensibly unrelated myths of love and sex are structured in accordance with a coherent underlying imagery, notably that of integrative desire, violence, building tension, and calming appeasement. This is found in particular in the Hesiodic account of her birth from the foam produced when the sky-god's severed genitals were cast into the sea, a myth which in many ways establishes the extent of her "honor," that is, of the realm over which she presided. But related imagery may also be found in Hesiod's account of the production of Pandora, the first woman, the traditional account of the choice of Paris, and the tragic accounts of Hippolytus and the Danaids. Much of this imagery was reflected in various ways in the practices of her cults. Her familiar patronage of sexual relations and of those coming to sexual maturity aside, Aphrodite's calming integrative function made her a suitable protectress of social cohesion, whilst her capacity to induce madness and inspire vigorous action made her a suitable protectress of military action. She was a protectress of maritime enterprises both because she was a daughter of Sky and Sea, but also because she was held to apply her calming, integrative powers to the elements. A social group particularly dear to Aphrodite was that of the courtesans. The chapter concludes with a special study of the latter-day myth of "sacred prostitution" in Corinth. The only significant source for this notion is Strabo, and it can be demonstrated that he has erroneously projected into the remote Corinthian past a custom familiar to him from his own, Augustan, day and from his home region of Asia Minor, as found in the cult of the goddess Ma at Comana.

We turn then to the varieties of more secretive religious activity, those of mysteries and magic (Part VII), beginning with investigations of the deities of the two principal mystery cults, that of Dionysus and that of Demeter and Kore. **Susan Guettel Cole** (Chapter 21) analyzes the cults of the ever-mobile and adventitious (though actually already Mycenaean) Dionysus. His willing worshipers experienced him through a positive form of ritual "madness," which was radically distinguished from the wanton and destructive madness experienced by those who resisted his cult. Wine was originally the primary concern of Dionysiac ritual. The consumption of wine, like Dionysus himself, could lead to a pleasant and harmless madness, when done in

orderly and ritual fashion, but it could induce the more dangerous and destructive form of madness when done without order. The increasing importance of Dionysus in the archaic and classical periods reflected the increasing importance of wine and the circumstances of its communal consumption, in symposiums and elsewhere, to the developing Greek state. Dionysus was above all a god of transitions. Dionysiac scenes on Attic vases, particularly those offering distinctive, challenging frontal faces, address the theme of transition to an altered state, be this by means of wine, frenetic dance, sleep, or death. In Dionysiac ritual his worshipers took on the roles of characters from his myths, and the (transitional) donning of costume was integral to and constitutive of his rites; hence his association with masks and the theater. The so-called "Orphic" gold leaves, buried with the dead to guide them through the underworld, are now recognized to be in fact Dionysiac. Death was a final transition over which the god presided, and across the Greek world people had themselves initiated into his rites in preparation for it.

Kevin Clinton (Chapter 22) discusses the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Kore. Despite Mylonas' despair at ever discovering the secret of the Mysteries, it is indeed possible to reconstruct a great deal of them from diverse evidence. The *mystēria* were named for the "blindfolded" *mystai*, the initiates who were about to *see* and to undergo an extraordinary experience, the attractiveness of which was enhanced by the secrecy that enveloped it. Literary sources indicate that those who had seen the mysteries hoped for a better afterlife than those who had not. Amongst iconographic sources the Ninnion Tablet and the Regina Vasorum in particular help us to understand the roles of two of the obscurer gods in the Eleusinian myth, the pair of torch-carrying youths Eubouleus and Iakchos. They constituted equal and opposite underworld escorts and framed the sacred drama seen by the initiates. Iakchos (in the form of a statue carried by a priest) escorted the blindfolded initiates to Demeter (in the form of a hierophantid?) as she sat mourning for her daughter on the Mirthless Rock. This can be identified with a rock seat inside the cave in the cliff within the sanctuary itself. Eubouleus in turn (in the form of a priest?) escorted Kore (in the form of another hierophantid?) out of an "underworld" pit adjacent to the rock, to reunite them. Subsequently, images of the two goddesses were displayed to the new initiates in the Telesterion, in a brilliant light that may have emanated from the torches held by the former initiates, the *epoptai*. The *epoptai* themselves were then permitted to witness a further scene, perhaps, if the Christian Hippolytus is to believed, a grain of corn and Demeter's cornucopia-bearing child Ploutos, the embodiment of agricultural "prosperity."

M.W. Dickie (Chapter 23) looks at magic. He observes that, for all the conceptual issues some have raised about the definition of magic in an ancient Greek context, the ancient concept of magic (*mageia*, *goēteia*) was roughly equivalent to our own, which after all derives from it. The ancient concept probably had its roots in the arrival of itinerant Persian fire-priests, *magoi*, into the Greek world in the later sixth century BC, whose rituals began to mimic those of mystery cults. From the fifth or early fourth centuries BC we find *magoi* associated with various spell types: curse tablets (too much has been made of the notion that these are products of ancient Greece's culture of competition), meteorological spells, healing spells, root-cutting spells, divination (with the scrying varieties coming to prominence in the hellenistic period) and necromancy. But wonders and illusions without specific practical end, "conjuring

tricks'' that did not necessarily seek to affect the behavior of any individual directly, were also an important part of the ancient magician's portfolio. Such things, far from being buried in secrecy, belonged rather in the realm of flamboyant and theatrical public performance. Already in the classical period magicians seem to have performed a sort of shadow puppetry. Snake-handling and various types of illusions involving statues may have been developed in the hellenistic period. No doubt such public performances were designed to draw in contracts for more discreet – and lucrative – private work. Magicians perhaps tended to be itinerant figures on the margins of society, denizens of the demi-monde. The extent to which they came into conflict with the law as they went about their trade remains obscure, but the notion that their rituals attempted to bypass or control the gods may have laid them open to charges of impiety.

Our final full group of chapters (Part VIII) looks at the dialogue between religion and some of the media that reflect, refract or constitute it: literature in general, philosophical literature more particularly, and art. **Thomas Harrison** (Chapter 24) asks how we should view the relationship between religion as portrayed in Greek literary texts and the religion of ''real life.'' Do the different authors offer a partial ''take'' on the religion around them, skewed and selected by their personal predilections and the genre in which they work? Or are the various imaginary worlds of Greek literature to be regarded as themselves constitutive of Greek religious experience? With what presuppositions do scholars go about selecting ancient texts (or portions of texts) through which to study the subject? The common approach to the study of literary religion, in which utterances on a particular religious theme are stripped out of an author or a text and used to reconstruct that author's attitude to it, is misconceived. In exploiting literary texts for the study of Greek religion we should pay careful attention, in anthropological fashion, to the wider belief system in which statements about the divine, especially ostensibly negative ones, participate. Religious belief was sustained because the Greeks cushioned that belief's principal propositions with a series of let-out clauses. Thus a proposition explicit and implicit in a wide range of classical texts maintains that all unjust acts are punished by divine intervention. This proposition was sustained against experience by, amongst others, the following let-out clauses: retribution is rarely direct; gods do not punish every offence themselves, but can leave other humans to do it; there is not always a one-to-one relationship between offence and punishment; punishment may be delayed, even beyond the perpetrator's lifetime; and (paradoxically) the gods are, for a variety reasons, not always just. Failure to appreciate the role of such let-out clauses in sustaining a system of belief leads casual readers of literary pronouncements in the field of religion to overemphasize views that are apparently critical of traditional religion. Thus when Xenophon talks of fraud in divination, this should not be read as an indication of a personal or a wider Greek doubt of the validity of divination, but as an indication that the general proposition that the gods imparted the truth to mankind through divination was in fact thriving.

Fritz-Gregor Herrmann (Chapter 25) investigates the philosophical response to ancient Greek religion, and focuses on the critical moment, namely the theology offered, or seemingly offered, by Plato. It is possible to offer a relatively coherent summary of Plato's theology sewn together from prima facie readings of the relevant dialogues. In this the immutable is associated with the divine, and the changeable

with the non-divine. Partial order is imposed on the chaotic world by a demiurge or creator-god, who is good, with reference to that which is immutable. He fashions within his creation the divine and eternal principle of soul, shared to a greater or lesser extent by all that moves, and which is capable of perceiving the immutable. But this sort of construction is quite misleading. First, we are not licensed to read Plato's dialogues as each shedding light on a different aspect of a coherent and fixed underlying Platonic system of thought. Secondly, such a reading is an unsophisticated and reductive one, comparable to taking Stephen Hawking's references to God to testify to a personal belief on his part, when it is clear from their context that they are metaphorical or allegorical, or that they are graceful appropriations of the language both of the particular scholars with whom he engages and of the broader tradition within which he writes. Similarly, Plato's remarks about a creator-god and souls should be regarded as myth, allegory, and appropriation, all with the purpose of persuasion. Careful consideration of Plato's rational theology shows that the role of the divine is in fact taken by "the good." However, Plato's leading characters, Socrates and others, often assert the social necessity of traditional varieties of religious belief in human society. Plato declined to distinguish between his rational enterprise and such social necessity in order to speak to a dual readership, on the one hand an audience that was educated but without philosophical training, and on the other the skilled specialists of the Academy. Plato's failure to advertise this distinction led to his religious thought being simplistically misunderstood by Peripatetics and Stoics before being taken up into the theology of the early church.

T. H. Carpenter (Chapter 26) shows how material images formed part of the "complex interweaving of economic, artistic, and political motivations that shaped Athenians' responses to their gods." Neither "art" nor "religion" are concepts the ancient Greeks would easily have recognized, and the concept of "religious art" even less so. As for the multifarious Athenian deployment of material imagery in religious contexts, the Great Panathenaea festival offers a valuable case study. The archaizing amphoras given as prizes are now valued at around half a million dollars each, although at the time of their production they were worth less than the oil they contained. At the heart of the festival was the dedication of a new *peplos* to the ancient and revered but to us obscure Athene Polias statue, and into this the women of Athens wove every year the story of the Gigantomachy. Indeed, it seems that this story, one of profound metaphorical significance for Athens, was preserved and celebrated rather more in material images than it was in literary narrative. It is striking that no cult was associated with Pericles' magnificent new temple and Athene-image, the Parthenon and the Parthenos: these were adornments for and celebrations of the city, not the goddess. As for the Athenians' representation of their religious practices in material images, extant artifacts may be able to tell us much, but they have to be handled with care. Whilst some vases may indeed be readable as useful documents of traditional Athenian ritual practice, the ritual imagery on others may blur misleadingly into mythological narrative, or it may be realigned in accordance with the ritual practices the painter imagined to prevail in the lands to which he hoped to export his vase. White-ground *lēkythoi*, produced only for the home funerary market, evidently carried imagery intended to speak to the Athenians themselves, and the images they chose to carry were gently reassuring ones.

We conclude with an epilogue on the contemporary popular reception of ancient Greek religion. **Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones** (Chapter 27) analyzes the silver screen's response to classical mythological subjects. Mass-market movies often respond to ancient myths in a more vital fashion than does art-house cinema: they are more inclined to appropriate the myths and creatively rework them in the spirit familiar in antiquity itself. The study focuses on the projection of the gods and their differentiation from mortals in two mass-market Ray Harryhausen films, *Jason and the Argonauts* and *Clash of the Titans*. A basically Homeric Olympus is extended from the tales of Achilles and Odysseus into those of Jason and Perseus. Imagined as a cross between the Acropolis and a nineteenth-century neoclassical fantasy, it is separated from the mortal world by a cloud layer. Here the gods can observe the mortals from whom they live distantly by means of a viewing screen in the form of a pool. The gods are distinguished from mortals by size, by shape-shifting and epiphanic powers, and by dress. They wear white robes that appeal to the image we (misleadingly) derive of them from the marble sculptures antiquity has bequeathed us. But the gods are also differentiated from mortals through the semiotics of casting: gods are played by international stars, mortals by (then) relative unknowns. More subtly, casting is also used to convey the Homeric personalities of the various gods and the relationships between them to an untutored audience in an efficient way. Zeus is taken by the great theatrical lord, Laurence Olivier, his wife Hera by Olivier's familiar "stage wife" Claire Bloom, and Aphrodite by the cinematic "love goddess" Ursula Andress, already known for her iconic salute to Aphrodite's birth from the waves in *Dr No*. The gods are also distinguished by the clever superimposition of differentiated time-tracks: mortal heroes are shown growing to manhood within the span of a brief divine conversation. The ultimate triviality of mortal life to the gods, and their fickleness in interacting with it, is well conveyed by the mortal world's embodiment in an Olympian chess game or a toy gladiatorial arena.

PART I

In the Background

CHAPTER ONE

Greek Religion and the Ancient Near East

Scott B. Noegel

> In fact, the names of nearly all the gods came to Hellas from Egypt. For I am convinced by inquiry that they have come from foreign parts, and I believe that they came chiefly from Egypt.
>
> (Herodotus, 2.50.1, ca. 450 BC)

The historical relationship between Greek religion and the ancient Near East is one that scholars have pondered, investigated, and debated for many years. Approaches to the subject have ranged from the merely suggestive to the fiercely polemical. At the heart of the subject is a question of cultural influence; that is to say, whether striking similarities in the textual, artistic, and archaeological remains constitute evidence for Near Eastern influence on Greek culture or whether one can account for affinities by seeing them as independent developments. It is into this larger context of cultural influence that one must place discussions of Greek religion and the ancient Near East.

In their outward forms, at least, Aegean religions appear very similar to those in the Near East. In both, for example, one finds cult images, altars and sacrifices, libations and other ritual practices, sanctuaries, temples and temple functionaries, laws and ethics, prayer, hymns, incantations, curses, cultic dancing, festivals, divination, ecstasy, seers, and oracles. Other shared features include the existence of divinities and demons of both genders, an association of gods with cosmic regions, notions of the sacred, and concepts of pollution, purification, and atonement. However, since one can find these features in religious traditions that had no contact with the Aegean or the Near East it is possible that they represent independent developments. On the other hand, their presence elsewhere does not necessarily rule out the possibility that they are the result of cultural influence. As some classicists have pointed out, Near Eastern influence is the most likely explanation for some elements – certain purification rituals, the sacrificial use of scapegoats, and foundation deposits – to name just a few. But how and when did such elements make their way to the Greek world? Such questions are not easily answered.

For centuries, questions of influence were intimately bound up with perspectives of privilege. Scholarship of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often took it for granted that "Greece" was the font of western civilization. Informed by Romantic

nationalism and, in part, by the racism associated with it, it understood the "genius" of Greek civilization as marking the end of antiquity and the start of a "miracle" that "anticipated the Enlightenment by breaking with myth, tradition, and puerile superstition to achieve a critical view of religion" (Lincoln 2004:658). The Near East represented all that was "barbarian" and "pagan." Consequently, looking eastward for evidence of contact and influence remained a largely peripheral enterprise. A few scholars offered challenges to the dominant paradigm (Astour 1965; Bérard 1902–3; Brown 1898; Farnell 1911; Gordon 1956, 1962, 1966, 1967; Wirth 1921), but their works went largely unnoticed by classicists. Recent decades have seen this paradigm shift, but it has not shifted without a good deal of controversy and disciplinary polemic (Bernal 1987, 1990, 1991, 2001; Lefkowitz 1996a, 1996b).

Today, it is fair to say that a consensus view among classicists and Near Eastern scholars admits of some East-to-West influence. Yet vital questions remain. How much and what kind of influence are we speaking of? How early does this influence occur? And how does one differentiate evidence for mere contact from evidence for influence? Responses to these questions have been hotly debated, and typically they have fallen along disciplinary lines, with classicists seeing Near Eastern influence as largely intermittent until the late archaic and classical periods (Burkert 1992, 2004, 2005a; Scheid 2004) and Near Eastern scholars (and a few classicists: Morris 1992, 2001; Walcot 1966; West 1995, 1997) pushing for greater influence and earlier dates (Burstein 1996; Dalley and Reyes 1998a; Naveh 1973; Redford 1992; Talon 2001). Influence in both directions is generally accepted for the hellenistic period and later (Kuhrt 1995; Linssen 2004).

The question of Near Eastern influence would appear to be difficult enough to answer were it not for a series of more recent challenges that have come from a variety of disciplines. Anthropologists, for example, have drawn attention to the modern western biases that inform the very question of influence. Historians of religion ask what is meant by "influence" in a world of constant mutual contact and exchange. Classicists too are now urging us to consider what preconditions make any cultural exchange a possibility and to define with greater rigor the modalities of transmission in both directions (Johnston 1999a; Raaflaub 2000). Other scholars question whether one can legitimately speak about "religion" in cultures that possess no corresponding word for it. Indeed, some wonder whether any proposed taxonomy for religion can account for its inherent diversity and plurality of forms, or whether any taxonomy can be free from ideology (Smith 2004:169, 171–2, 179). Terms like "cult," "sacrifice," and "ritual," whose definitions had long been taken for granted, have now become focal points for theoretical debate and redefinition (Bremmer 2004; Burkert 1983; Girard 1977; Hubert and Mauss 1964; Rappaport 1979; Smith 2004:145–59; Versnel 1993:16–89).

The label "Near East" also has become increasingly problematic for some scholars when discussing religion. For one thing, the phrase masks under a single rubric dozens of diverse peoples and cultures. Though there is some heuristic utility in dividing the Near East into several cultural zones, scholars find it extremely difficult to speak generally of "religion" in Egypt, Syro-Canaan, Israel, Anatolia, or Mesopotamia alone, each of which possessed countless religions of infinite variety at family, village, and state levels (Hornung 1971; Morenz 1973; Oppenheim 1977; J. Smith 2003; Zevit 2001). Moreover, implicit in the classification "Near East" is a

geographical perspective that can be defined only by its relation to the West. Thus, for some it has become problematic at best and "orientalist" at worst (Said 1978). For similar reasons, many classicists have begun to avoid employing the anachronistic term "Greek" when discussing the many disparate Aegean cultures of antiquity and opt instead for more localized and accurate terms such as "Athenian," "Spartan," and the like.

Given such difficulties, scholars typically have approached the subject of "Greek religion and the ancient Near East" in one of three overlapping ways, each of which depends on the scholar's definition of religion and view concerning the general comparability of religious traditions. The first approach examines the subject by remaining attentive to the particular times, places, and cultural contexts of each religion under investigation. It aims to identify cases in which specific religious practices and beliefs are adopted, adapted, and transformed when cultures come into contact (Brown 1995, 2000, 2001; Dotan 2003; Faraone 1993, 1995, 2002; Frankfurter 1998; Noegel 1998, 2004; Toorn 1985, 1997). The second approach adopts a more holistic and comparative vantage, and seeks to ascertain whether a comparative enterprise is justified by identifying trends, issues, and features that unite the various religions of the "Mediterranean world" (Graf 2004b; D.P. Wright 2004a). The third approach sees value in comparing the various religions of the world regardless of their historical and cultural contexts. It is interested less in identifying cases of influence and exchange than in removing the study of all religions from their relative academic isolation (Eliade 1959, 1969; Mondi 1990).

Regardless of which approach one adopts, those pursuing the study of "Greek religion and the ancient Near East" must consign themselves to sorting through and interpreting an unwieldy and thorny mass of textual, artistic, and archaeological evidence. It is, of course, impossible to treat such a vast array of information adequately here. Therefore, I shall focus the discussion on four problems that are central to any investigation: (1) myths, rituals, and cults; (2) the vehicles of cultural transmission; (3) shared taxonomies and the problem of cultural exchange; and (4) monotheisms, monolatries, henotheisms, and polytheisms.

Myths, Rituals, and Cults

It is not surprising that some mythological traditions should have crossed geographic and cultural boundaries. After all, the ancient world was highly cosmopolitan, interactive, and multilingual (Sasson 2005). Some myths were widely known in antiquity. The epic of Gilgamesh, for example, was translated into a number of languages. Cuneiform tablets discovered at Amarna in Egypt that date to the fourteenth century BC reveal their scribes to have been acquainted with a number of Mesopotamian mythological traditions, including those of Adapa, Nergal, and Ereshkigal. They also offer direct evidence for close contacts between Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, Cyprus, Anatolia, and the city-states of Syro-Canaan. Though the tablets record no correspondence with Mycenae it is likely that perishable materials now lost, like papyrus, leather, and wood, also served as media for correspondence. Indeed, evidence for Mycenae's international contacts comes from a cache of Mesopotamian cylinder seals discovered at Thebes (Porada 1981) and from the very word for Egypt

in Mycenaean Greek (*a-i-ku-pu-ti-jo*, later Greek *Aigyptos*), which derives from the Egyptian words *ḥwt-k3-ptḥ* (lit. "Temple of Ptah") applied metonymically to all of Egypt.

In the early part of the last century classicists pointed to the existence of a number of parallels between Aegean mythologies and those found in biblical, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian texts (Brown 1898; Frazer 1921), but often these comparisons lacked methodological sophistication and relied too heavily upon broad thematic similarities. More recent studies demonstrate a greater awareness of the limits of the comparative method, but also a greater appreciation for what shared mythological elements imply (or do not imply) about intercultural contact and the diffusion of ideas (Burkert 1987b; Graf 2004a; N. Marinatos 2001; Mondi 1990; Penglase 1994; West 1995, 1997).

The works of Hesiod and Homer, in particular, have been brought into close dialogue with the great epics of Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syro-Canaan, and, less often, Egypt (Bachvarova 2002, 2005; Langdon 1990; N. Marinatos 2001; Noegel 2002, 2005a). It is now appropriate to speak of an "Asiatic mythological *koinē*" and its formative impact on the Aegean literatures of the Bronze and Iron Ages (Graf 2004a; cf. "Aegean *koinē*" in Burkert 1985, 1992, but "Near Eastern-Aegean cultural community [*koinê*]" in Burkert 2005a:291).

Such a *koinē*, scholars suggest, explains the parallels that exist between Aegean and Near Eastern mythological conceptions concerning creation, cosmology, the gods, humankind, death, and the afterlife (Astour 1998; West 1995). In some cases, the mythological parallels are so geographically and temporally widespread that any effort to trace their westward movement with precision is impossible. Such is the case with the story of the world deluge. It is attested in a number of Sumerian, Akkadian, Greek, and Indian sources, and of course in the biblical story of Noah (Genesis 6–9). Another is that of a battle between a god or hero and many-headed serpent representing chaos. One finds this theme in mythological texts from Anatolia, Egypt, Ugarit, and Israel (Isaiah 27:1; Psalms 74:12–14). Its appearance in a variety of Greek myths, including those of Heracles and Jason and the Argonauts (Watkins 1994), clearly represents eastern influence even though the exact path of transmission cannot be known.

In some cases the parallels appear to be so close that they suggest literary borrowing. For example, the Hittite myth of the "Kingship of Heaven" involves the violent severing of Heaven's penis in a way that recalls the castration of Uranus in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Also reminiscent of the *Theogony* is the Hittite "Song of Ullikumi" in which a weather-god defeats a usurper deity in a way remarkably similar to the manner in which Zeus defeats Typhon (Burkert 2005a:295–6).

Mesopotamian myths also have provided a number of conspicuous parallels. Some of the closest have been those that connect Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Babylonian creation story Enūma Elish. Both texts, for example, describe how the commingling of the Sky and the Earth resulted in the birth of the gods. Other close parallels include those that link portions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with the Atrahasis epic and the epic of Gilgamesh (Abusch 2001; Burkert 1991, 1992:88–93, 2005a; Rollinger 1996; West 1997). Well-known examples of the latter include the similarities between Achilles' speech to his dead friend Patroclus and Gilgamesh's speech to his deceased comrade Enkidu. Also remarkable are parallels that connect the account of

Gilgamesh's refusal of Ishtar's sexual advances to Homer's treatment of Aphrodite and Anchises. The evidence for literary borrowing that these motifs and thematic parallels provide, and there are many more than can be elaborated upon here, is bolstered by additional similarities in style and compositional structure (Morris 1997). There can no longer be any doubt that at least some of these parallels are the result of contact with the Near East.

Nevertheless, though striking, the value of such parallels for the comparative study of Aegean and Near Eastern religions remains difficult to gauge. Much depends on how one defines myth (or epic: Edmunds 2005) and its relation to ritual and the cult. In previous years, ancient mythologies were generally understood as scripts for ritual performances that served to ensure fertility and the continuance of the agricultural cycle (Hooke 1933; Malinowski 1926). Inspiring this model, in part, was the knowledge that Enūma Elish was recited on the fourth day of the Babylonian New Year (*akītu*) festival (Bidmead 2002). The Hittite story of the combat between the weather-god and the serpent Illuyanka similarly informs us that it was recited during the Hattic New Year (*purulli*) festival (Beckman 2005:257). Such texts and their proposed purposes have historically been used as templates for understanding the function of Aegean mythological texts.

Most scholars today would consider it naive to ascribe to all cultures such a relationship between myths and rituals. There are simply too many cultural differences that inform the meaning of both myth and ritual. It is clear that Aegean peoples did not consider the *Theogony* or the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* "sacred texts" in the same way that Mesopotamians understood Enūma Elish (Hultgard 2004), even if later Greek writers did consider them formative for defining the hellenic pantheon (Herodotus 2.53). We also have no evidence that Aegean mythological texts were ever enacted or recited during cultic events, and even if one concedes that some Aegean myths played such a role (e.g., *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*), it is probable that their relationship to the cult was understood differently in Mesopotamia (Lambert 1968). Few scholars of the Near East maintain today that Enūma Elish and the account of Illuyanka scripted the ritual events of their respective New Year festivals. Nevertheless, most do understand Mesopotamian myths and rituals to be tightly connected, in that the myths served as a liturgical means of reifying the cosmological importance of the ritual events. They point out that even when ritual texts invoke mythological references they do so only to establish divine precedent. Such evidence suggests that the relationship between myths and rituals may have been closer in Mesopotamia and Anatolia than in the Aegean world.

What, then, is the relationship between Aegean myths and rituals? Scholars have had an extremely difficult time answering this question (Fontenrose 1966). One of the reasons for this is that the descriptions of religious rituals found in the Homeric epics are highly stylized and therefore do not resemble the actual ritual practices of any historical period. There are some exceptions to this, such as the mantic praxis depicted in the so-called "Book of the Dead" (*Odyssey* 11), which shares affinities with Hittite necromancy rituals (Steiner 1971). But on the whole, Homer's treatment of rituals tends to be generalized. In addition, the Homeric epics were so well known that they could have influenced the ways in which later rituals were performed, and the ways in which artists and philosophers imagined religion (Mikalson 2004b:211).

Another reason why establishing the relationship between Aegean myths and rituals has proven so difficult is that there appears to be little agreement amongst scholars as to how to define ritual (Bremmer 2004; Versnel 1993:16–89). Inspired by a variety of theoretical perspectives (e.g., structuralist, psychological, sociological, ideological), many new ways for understanding the meaning and origins of myth also have emerged (Burkert 1983, 1985; Csapo 2005; Graf 2004a). Regardless of one's methodological approach, it seems fairly obvious to most scholars that some structural affinities exist between myths and rituals generally. Nevertheless, it appears that the only safe generalization about myth is that it often serves an apologetic function providing belief systems, and thus ritual practices, with divinely sanctioned etiologies (Graf 2004a).

All this makes it extremely difficult to use comparative Aegean and Near Eastern mythology as evidence for the diffusion of religious traditions. Certainly cultic diffusion must lie behind many of the parallels, but until scholars can clarify with greater precision the relationship between mythology and ritual practice in the Near East and in the Aegean world, we must see Near Eastern mythology primarily as a stimulus to the Greek poetic tradition and, according to some scholars, even to philosophy (Thomas 2004; West 1995:41–2).

The Vehicles of Cultural Transmission

Another problem that remains central to the investigation of "Greek religion and the ancient Near East" is that of the vehicles of cultural transmission. Simply put, how were religious ideas and practices transmitted from the civilizations of the Near East to the Aegean? And who transmitted them? As one might imagine, many factors, including trade and commerce, warfare, migration, exile, foreign employment, religious festivals, and diplomacy, are likely to have created contexts for exchange (Dalley 1998). Unfortunately, the textual, artistic, and archaeological evidence is too fragmentary to provide a detailed picture of how these factors enabled religious exchange in each historical period. Nevertheless, it does allow us to recognize the importance of all of them throughout the history of the Aegean world. Even a cursory survey of the evidence reveals a long history of nearly constant international exchange by land and sea (Astour 1995; Bass 1995), which is likely to have stimulated exchange among the region's diverse religious traditions.

It is generally recognized that, during the Bronze Age, the Minoan civilization of Crete played a formative role in shaping the cultural contours of what was later to become Mycenaean Greece (Burkert 1985:19–22). However, it is also known that the Minoan civilization was itself greatly shaped by contacts with Egypt and with the civilizations of the eastern Mediterranean, including Mesopotamia (Cline 1987, 1991, 1994; N. Marinatos 1993; Redford 1992:242–3). In early scholarship, Minoan religion was typically referred to as a "primitive" form of "fertility worship" that focused primarily on a "Great Mother Goddess." Today, however, scholars see the Minoan religious system as far more complex, resembling the sophisticated cults of the Near East (Marinatos 1993).

Yet despite international influences, Minoan Crete was not a carbon copy of Near Eastern polities. It did not represent Near Eastern culture any more than it

represented "the first high European culture" (Burkert 2005a:292). It was an island culture of its own making and it was highly influential. Wonderfully preserved Minoan frescoes on the island of Thera, for example, demonstrate the extent of their presence in the region and depict their travels to North Africa (S. Marinatos 1973). The palace walls of the Hyksos capital of Avaris (Tel el-Daba') in the sixteenth century BC reveal the presence of Minoan artisans (Marinatos 1998), as do palace reliefs at Mari, on the mid-Euphrates, Qatna in Syria, and Tel Kabri in Israel.

The material culture of Mycenae, from its vaulted tombs to its mountain sanctuaries, gives conclusive evidence for the imprint of Cretan religious traditions – so much so that many classicists find it difficult to differentiate Minoan religion from that of Mycenae. Nevertheless, one must rely entirely upon the artistic and archaeological record of Crete in order to understand Minoan religion. No one has yet been able to decipher convincingly the Minoan scripts in use from 1850 to 1450 BC (i.e., Cretan hieroglyphic, Linear A, and Cypro-Minoan). Linear B, the script in use after the thirteenth century BC, was used to record an early form of Greek. A period of intermittent destruction separates Linear B from the earlier scripts. Nevertheless, the apparent rupture and change of script do not correlate to massive changes in Minoan culture, for many aspects of the so-called "Minoan–Mycenaean religion" appear to have survived the transition (Nilsson 1950). Despite an influx of Mycenaean settlers after this period, Minoan culture remained distinctively Minoan (Knapp 1995:1442).

While much attention has focused on Crete, in part owing to its later connections to mainland Mycenae, the Mediterranean archaeological record attests to a much larger network of maritime powers during the Bronze Age.

The Egyptians had enjoyed a long and ubiquitous presence on the Mediterranean. Egypt's close commercial and cultural connections to Syria, especially the city of Byblos, meant that it had to protect its interests there. The conflicts that ensued between Egypt and the Hittite kingdom during the fourteenth to thirteenth centuries BC are a fitting demonstration of Egypt's protective interest in the Levant. Not only were some Egyptians (probably merchants) living in various cities of Syria and the Levant, as well as on Cyprus, some Aegean peoples (also probably merchants) were living in Egypt (Dothan 1995:1273). There they doubtless were exposed to Egyptian religious practices and beliefs.

Mycenaean wares found at the seaport of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra, in Syria) show that exchanges between Mycenaeans and the peoples of the eastern edges of the Mediterranean were close and frequent (Langdon 1989). Ongoing trade with Mycenae would have provided opportunities for the introduction of Syria's many gods (in fact Ugaritic offering lists name more than one hundred gods: D.P. Wright 2004b:174). As illustrated by the Bronze Age shipwreck discovered at Ulu Burun off the coast of southern Turkey, the peoples of Syro-Canaan were long engaged in the transport of cargo from Egypt to Mesopotamia, Cyprus, the Levant, and the Aegean (Bass 1989). Such a context offered numerous occasions for cultural exchange.

Bronze Age Cyprus was also a cosmopolitan place. There is evidence for Hittites, Semites, Hurrians, Egyptians, and Aegean peoples all living on the island. Because of its proximity to the Syrian coast, its material culture appears to have shared more in common with the lands to the East. Nevertheless, because it was a vital source of copper, its contacts reached far West as well. Though our knowledge of Bronze Age

Cypriote religions is scant, the settlement of so many diverse peoples must have brought many different traditions into contact.

The sum total of evidence makes it clear that the Bronze Age Mediterranean was far more interactive than is often portrayed in textbooks. Indeed, we must envision it as a maritime world in which people from Crete, Cyprus, Sardinia, Rhodes, Thera, the city-states of Syria and the Levant, and, of course, Egypt enjoyed strong commercial and cultural ties. It is safe to assume that when these peoples took to the water they took their religious traditions along with them (Brody 1998).

Of course, sea trade was not the only means of cultural transmission during the Bronze Age. Religious festivals, known especially from Anatolia, also provided opportunities for contact between Hurrian, Hittite, and Aegean bards, performers, and cultic personnel (Bachvarova forthcoming). Such festivals accompanied the transport of divine statues from one region to another. The two bronze "smiting gods" found at the Mycenaean site of Phylakopi on Melos may be placed into this context. The Mycenaeans also imported an Anatolian goddess, whom they called "Potnia Aswiya." Evidence suggests that her cultic officials and rituals accompanied her (Bachvarova forthcoming; Morris 2001). Though Hittite religion appears to have synthesized Hattic and Hurrian traditions (McMahon 1995:1983), it must be kept in mind that scribes who wrote Akkadian had long lived at Hattusha and had promoted Mesopotamian learning there (Beckman 1983). Since Akkadian education consisted of learning the epic religious texts, we may see Anatolia as a conduit for the westward movement of Mesopotamian religious ideas as well.

As a consequence of the catastrophes that led to, or resulted from, the invasions of the "Sea Peoples," palace life in the Mediterranean came to an abrupt end in the twelfth century BC, plunging the Aegean world into a "dark age" (Sandars 1978). It is, of course, "dark" only to us because next to nothing survives from this period that might shed light on it – written records, for example, appear to vanish. Nevertheless, archaeological finds found on certain sites on the periphery of Egyptian and Neo-Hittite control show that contacts between the Aegean and Anatolia (especially Lydia) and Syria were not cut off entirely and that, though radically altered, international maritime trade did not cease (Muhly 2003; Sherratt 2003).

It is into this context that we must place the coastal peoples of Syro-Canaan (especially Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos), whom Greek texts (but no native sources) refer to as "Phoenicians" (Burstein 1996; Stern 2003). Their ubiquitous maritime, mercantile, and colonial activities made them enormously influential throughout the Mediterranean world (Noegel 2005b). Already by the end of the twelfth century BC, the rulers of Tyre and Sidon, often with Assyrian encouragement, had re-established the trading links that once connected the Aegean world to the cities of the East (Frankenstein 1979). But their expansion did not stop there. In the years that followed, Tyre extended its presence primarily in a southern direction into Palestine and North Africa, though Tyrian enclaves are also in evidence at Carthage and Cyprus and further north at Carchemish. Sidon, on the other hand, moved north into Anatolia, Cilicia, Aramaea, and Assyria, and west to Crete, Cyprus, Sardinia, Sicily, and Spain. Contacts between Phoenician and Aegean centers were clearly very close since early in this period Greek speakers adopted and adapted the Phoenician alphabet (Naveh 1973), although possibly through Aramaean intermediaries. As demonstrated by dedicatory inscriptions devoted to the goddess Astarte of Sidon in Spain and

Cyprus, the religions of the distinctive Phoenician city-states were transported with them (Ribichini 1999; Stern 2003).

Another result of the upheavals of the twelfth century BC was the settlement in Canaan of the Philistines. Textual, artistic, and archaeological evidence shows that the Philistines were Aegean in origin (Dothan 1995; cf. Morris 2003). They are listed and depicted, for example, along with a number of others, as one of the "Sea Peoples," on reliefs at the mortuary temple of Ramesses III (1187–1156 BC) at Medinet Habu. The reliefs depict pharaoh's victory over them during a naval battle fought on Egypt's coast. Additional documents inform us that after the war the "Sea Peoples" settled on the Levantine coast. Excavations at Philistine sites, especially Ashdod, Ekron, and Tel Qasile, show them to have been highly advanced, especially in farming, building, metallurgy, and the production of olive oil. Their religious cults included Aegean, Canaanite, Cypriot, and Egyptian elements. A dedicatory inscription to a goddess (perhaps named Potnia) found at Ekron and written in a locally adapted Phoenician-type script similarly illustrates the complex culture of the Philistines (Noegel 2005c). The cult and inscription also demonstrate how mutually influential intercultural contact was early in the second millennium.

From the eighth century BC, a period coinciding with a "renaissance" of "Greek religion" (Mikalson 2004b:212), peoples of the Aegean came into increasing contact with Assyrians when the Assyrian king Tilglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) expanded his presence northward, defeating the kingdom of Urartu, and westward, taking control of Byblos and Tyre (Rollinger 2001). Shortly after these conquests, the city-states of Syria informed the Assyrian king that they were under attack by a people they called "Ionians" (whom some scholars see as a more general reference to the peoples of Euboea, Athens, Samos, and Naxos [Burkert 1992:13]). Tilglath-Pileser III's expansionist policies were continued by his successors Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC) and Sargon II (721–705 BC). The latter seized control of the Hittite city-states of Carchemish, Cilicia, and Zinjirli in the late eighth century BC, causing the kings of Paphos and Salamis in Cyprus to recognize his suzerainty and send gifts.

In the early seventh century BC the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704–681 BC) defeated the Ionians in a decisive naval battle. Soon afterwards, however, contact continued through the Assyrian royal house and its ambassadors (Parpola 2003), as well as merchants, artisans, and others who were eager to maintain Assyrian hegemony and entrepreneurial interests in the region. After securing his power in the region, Sennacherib instituted a policy of encouraging foreign trade and settlement on lands that he had thoroughly annexed (Lafranchi 2000). This policy extended his reach deep into the Aegean. Berossus tells us that Sennacherib even inscribed his achievements on bronze statues and placed them in Athens in a temple especially constructed for them (Dalley and Reyes 1998a:98). Though we cannot confirm the reference, the discovery of Mesopotamian bronze statues at temples in Athens, Delphi, Olympia, Rhodes, and Samos argues in favor of its credibility (Curtis 1994).

A little more than a generation after Sennacherib, when the Assyrian king Assurbanipal (669–627 BC) allied with Lydia against the Cimmerians, he protected his ambitions in the region by maintaining the royal road connecting Nineveh to Sardis. This road provided the Assyrian court with a direct conduit to channel its political, military, and cultural influences to western Anatolia, and by extension to the coastal

states of Ionia. It is into this context of exchange between royal courts that some scholars place the influence of Akkadian religious literature upon the Homeric epics (Rollinger 1996).

Other scholars credit peripatetic Near Eastern artisans (Gordon 1956), seers, and purification priests (Burkert 1992) with disseminating their sacred, "magical," and medical traditions (Thomas 2004) (and cite Homeric references to itinerant seers and bards in support, e.g., *Odyssey* 17.383–5). Thus, it is during this period of increased access (ca. the eighth to seventh centuries BC) that the Mesopotamian protective deities gallu and lamaštu were introduced to the Greek-speaking world, becoming the demons Gallo and Lamia (West 1991). Images of Gilgamesh and Enkidu slaying Humbaba, the guardian of the Cedar Forest, similarly began to inspire depictions of Perseus killing the Gorgon. Apotropaic masks of Humbaba's frightening face also appear in Aegean domestic settings at this time (Faraone 1992). The Aegean practice of extispicy, along with that of augury from birds, lecanomancy, and certain "magical" practices all appear to have been imported from the Near East during this period (Burkert 1992:41–52; Dalley and Reyes 1998a:100–1; Faraone 1993, 1995, 2002). The existence of migrant seers and bards may provide a background for understanding the etymological connection between the Greek word *temenos* "sacred precinct" and the Akkadian *temmēnu* "boundary marker, foundation deposit, temple platform" (West 1997:36). It also allows us to understand why many Greek musical instruments, as well as the so-called "Pythagorean" system of tuning, have Mesopotamian origins (Yamauchi 1967). Nevertheless, it is probable that such figures had enjoyed a great deal of influence already during the Bronze Age (Bachvarova forthcoming).

Still, cultural exchange between the cities of the Aegean and Mesopotamia was very close during the late archaic and classical periods. In some cases, the evidence for exchange appears to go well beyond the orbits of courtiers and migrant seers. One notable example is the worship of Hera at Samos, which had a particularly Mesopotamian look. Discovered there were Assyrian bronze votive figurines of a man at prayer with his hand on a dog. The use of dog images and sacred dog cemeteries at Samos closely resembles the cult of Gula the Babylonian goddess of healing whose image was a canine (Burkert 1992:17–19,75–9). Also discovered at Samos was a bronze *mušḫuššu* dragon, a creature associated with the Babylonian cult of Marduk. The annual cultic procession of Hera also involved ritual bathing and clothing of the divine statue similar to that practiced at Babylon during the New Year festival (Dalley and Reyes 1998a:98). Just how Hera's cult on Samos acquired these Mesopotamian trappings is unknown. Some have suggested the influence of traveling Assyrian merchants or Greek mercenaries returning from Babylon (Burkert 1992:77), but the combined evidence suggests a more continued Mesopotamian stimulus.

Evidence for Near Eastern influence in the Aegean world after the seventh century BC becomes increasingly obvious and is rarely debated. International affairs, especially wars, close the gap between east and west. Aegean mercenaries can be found in Egyptian, Levantine, and Mesopotamian armies, but we do not know what their religions were. Shifting alliances in the sixth century BC, caused in part by the threat of Babylonian power, brought Cyprus and Cyrene to the aid of Egypt. The Mediterranean world was becoming smaller. Ionian merchants and craftsmen were living in

Babylon and apparently marrying among the local population (Coldstream 1993). It is around this time that the Presocratic philosophers (e.g., Pythagoras of Samos, Pherecydes of Syros, and Thales of Miletos) were becoming familiar with Babylonian science and mythology (Dalley and Reyes 1998a:104).

Later still when Persia emerged as a world power, we find Babylon allying with Sparta, and despite the eventual war that ensued between the Greek city-states and Persia, east–west contacts of all kinds only increased. For some time, these contacts were hostile. For example, when the Ionians burned the temple of Kubaba in Sardis, the Persian kings launched a series of counterattacks on Greek sanctuaries that lasted for nearly two decades (Mikalson 2004b:217). Nevertheless, we eventually find Greeks working in Persia, even in positions of high status. Greek artisans began to adopt artistic styles that they thought of as Persian, even though the styles were in origin Babylonian (Dalley and Reyes 1998b:108–9). It is during this period of intimate contact that the Greek world became aware of the religions of Persia, including Zoroastrianism (de Jong 1997). By the fifth century BC Near Eastern mythologies were topics of discussion among Athenian sophists (Dalley and Reyes 1998b:110–11).

By the late fourth century BC, in the hellenistic period, cultural influences and religious practices were moving fluidly in all directions (Scheid 2004). Alexander's conquest of Babylon resulted in direct national ties with Macedonia and the steady flow of knowledge of Babylonian customs and beliefs to the west. Alexander and his Seleucid successors allowed Mesopotamian cities to exist as they had for centuries, and even participated in their religious festivals, including the Babylonian New Year, where presumably they would have been exposed to Babylonian religious customs and textual traditions such as that of Enūma Elish.

Alexander's successors in Egypt, the Ptolemies, lavished support upon Egyptian temples (Finnestad 1997) and fully promoted the worship of Egyptian gods, especially Amun-Re. They even portrayed themselves on temple walls in pharaonic dress as Horus incarnate (Koenen 1993). Egyptian influences appear to have been greater on hellenistic religion than hellenism was on Egyptian religion. Zeus was identified with Amun and was depicted with the physical attributes of Amun-Re, including his ram's horns and solar disk. Ptolemaic efforts to introduce the figure of Sarapis, on the other hand, did not meet the interests of the Egyptians, who preferred their long-standing solar cults of Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Amun-Re (Fraser 1972:1.274; Morenz 1973:246).

The city of Alexandria became a hotbed of intercultural exchange, where Greek speakers lived side by side with Jews and Egyptians. Their religious traditions came into frequent contact and conflict (Fraser 1972:1.24–76, 189–301; Gruen 1998, 2000). Alexandrian tombs illustrate the symbiotic relationship between hellenistic and Egyptian religious traditions (Venit 2002). Alexandrian literary activity similarly incorporates Egyptian religious tastes (Noegel 2004; Stephens 2003). Egyptian religions also spread to the Aegean. In the hellenistic period the cults of Isis, Horus, and Osiris were rather widespread throughout the Mediterranean world (Johnston 2004a:104–5; Mikalson 2005: 202). A cult to Amun had already been established in Athens a century earlier.

Though the latter periods of Aegean history are better documented than the earlier periods, the aggregate impact of the evidence suggests that the vehicles of cultural

transmission were as complex in the Bronze Age as they were at the end of the first millennium BC. It is clear that multiple opportunities for the exchange of religious ideas existed at all times, even if our understanding of them is better for some periods than others. Nevertheless, while we may obtain some insight into the contexts and mechanisms of exchange, our inability to provide anything but the broad historical contours of the processes of religious exchange remains a central problem for scholars.

Shared Taxonomies and the Problem of Cultural Exchange

Historians of religion have long been occupied with the study of what occurs when religions come into contact. But only in recent decades have classicists and scholars of the ancient Near East begun to engage in dialogue with them and their works. This dialogue has allowed the respective disciplines to recognize that few beliefs and practices are adopted or assimilated without adaptation and that no religious tradition is resistant to change or exists in a vacuum. Of course, when religions come into contact some elements are seen as too foreign. Ritual, for example, tends to be conservative by nature; the smallest changes, whether instituted from within or imposed from the outside, often provoke anxieties and fear of identity loss in practitioners. On the other hand, religious practices that appear too similar also cause problems of identity (Smith 2004:230–302). Thus it is extremely important to account for cultural borrowings, especially in matters of religious belief and practice, by postulating the existence of shared taxonomies (ways of classifying the world) and the preconditions that make adoption possible (Raaflaub 2000:60–4). Defining and explaining these taxonomies and preconditions is a complicated endeavor that poses a number of difficulties. Illustrating these difficulties particularly well is the hellenistic practice of equating Greek and Near Eastern gods.

During the hellenistic period, Hellenes began to equate the gods of foreign lands with their own native deities in a process often referred to by scholars as *interpretatio* or "translation." A Hellene could, without any apparent theological dilemma, worship any foreign god that most closely resembled his own native deity. Thus, Apollo was identified with Baal, Zeus with Amun, Aphrodite with Ishtar, Artemis with Anat, Demeter with Isis, and so on. In the past these equations were seen as evidence of the impact of hellenism in foreign lands. However, recent scholars have pointed out that such equations are found only in Greek sources, not Near Eastern ones, making them unlikely representations of hellenization (Oelsner 2002:189–90). Of course, this does not mean that they do not represent an effort to spread hellenic culture, only that they do not represent the successful result of such an effort.

Others have seen these translations as evidence for "syncretism" or "hybridity," that is, the fusion of Aegean and Near Eastern religions. However, neither "syncretism" nor "hybridity" offers a particularly useful model for understanding the process of *interpretatio*, and not just because of their tainted colonial histories (Graf 2004a:10). Neither model helps us to ascertain the processes that underlie such equations, and so neither is able to provide anything but a characterization of the phenomenon.

Scholars of the Near East have suggested that the translation of gods' names may be compared to the earlier Mesopotamian practice of listing divine names in one language (e.g., Sumerian) along with their equivalents in another language (e.g., Akkadian, Hurrian, Kassite, Hittite, Elamite) and brief descriptions of their function (Civil 1995:2312). Listings such as "An = *Anum*" and "An = *Anum ša amēli*" are typically discussed in this context. The lexical practice is sometimes described as having its origins in international law, specifically the need to invoke gods of equal rank in oaths (Assmann 2004:24–5). The custom is attested in sacred narratives as well. We find it in the biblical story of Abraham, who swears an oath to the Caananite king of Salem in the name of "Yahweh-El Most High," as opposed to the king's "El Most High" (Genesis 14:19–23).

Nevertheless, we cannot attribute this purpose to all divine synonym lists, because some of them offer linguistic equivalents for Sumerian divine names at a time when Sumerian was no longer spoken (e.g., "An = *Anum*" dates to 1300–1100 BC). Thus, it hardly could have represented contemporary ritual practice among the population. In addition, many of the gods of Mesopotamia had long borne multiple names. In some cases this makes it difficult to tell if the lists are simply providing a roster of a god's lesser-known names. Moreover the various lists had very different purposes and histories. "An = *Anum*," for example, serves to codify the known divine names in conjunction with contemporary knowledge and to map out their genealogical relationships to other gods, whereas the shorter list "Anu = *Anum ša amēli*" not only associates gods of similar function, it absorbs minor gods into major ones. It also associates a number of important gods of long standing (e.g., Enlil, Sîn, and Nabû) with the newly promoted Babylonian god Marduk (as it does also with Ea), thus making them subordinate to him (Lambert 1975). The lists, therefore, serve not simply to equate or even to codify, but also to establish a quasi-henotheistic divine order that was promulgated by the royal house. The lists are documents of political as much as religious import. Nevertheless, their comparative value for understanding the hellenistic practice of *interpretatio* is limited.

Another way of explaining the hellenistic practice of *interpretatio* has been to compare it with the Egyptian custom of joining divine names such as Amun-Re or Re-Harakhty. Yet this also is not exactly a parallel practice because the names do not represent translations. Neither of the Egyptian deities comprising joint names was regarded as foreign, and despite appearances, no "hybridity" is implied. Each deity retained its individuality; the first name stood for a god with "cultic/local dimension," the second for the "cosmic" or "translocal" manifestation of that god (Assmann 2004:25). Therefore, while the Egyptian practice may shed light on the phenomenon of dual divine names such as Yahweh-Elohim in Genesis 2–3 or Kothar-wa-Ḫasis at Ugarit (cf. Xella 1990), it does little to help us understand the process of *interpretatio*.

Moreover, a good deal of evidence suggests that peoples of the Near East understood their own gods to be distinct from those in other lands. The Hittites in particular resisted efforts to equate their own gods with those of others, even though they deliberately imported gods into their pantheon from elsewhere. As a result the members of their pantheon grew in number until the Hittites themselves referred to their pantheon as containing "thousands of gods." Their god-lists name numerous divinities, but keep their places of origin distinct. The few instances in

which the lists make apparent equations between one god and another have been shown to represent state efforts to bolster Hurrian elements in the Hittite pantheon (Collins 2004).

The peoples of the Near East not only regarded their own gods as distinct but also those of their neighbors. Thus when the Hittite king Murshili II (ca. 1350 BC) suffered a medical attack that resulted in an inability to speak, his priests suggested that he summon the gods of Lesbos and Mycenae to heal him (Morris 2001:428). Compare 2 Kings 1, where Ahaziah seeks help from Baal, and 2 Kings 5, where Naaman seeks help from Yahweh. In addition, an accompanying oracle asserts that these gods were to be worshiped in accordance with their native customs (Bachvarova forthcoming). Certainly, had such equations been possible, Murshili II could have requested the help of a deity with similar skills from his own pantheon.

Greek speakers similarly respected the power of foreign deities in their native lands. They also appear to have maintained the individuality of their own gods on foreign soil even though several of their own gods (e.g., Adonis, Aphrodite, Apollo, Meter) appear to have foreign origins (Burkert 1985:176–9). Discoveries dating to the hellenistic period give additional evidence for the individuality of foreign deities even in the Greek-speaking world. An altar found on the island of Kos, inscribed in both Greek and Aramaic, is dedicated to Bel, the god of Palmyra. Similarly, a bilingual Greek and Phoenician inscription found at the Piraeus in Athens is dedicated to Nergal. Greek ''magical'' papyri dating to the Roman period also invoke numerous Egyptian, Levantine, and Mesopotamian gods individually by name, regardless of whether they accord them similar status. Therefore, despite the existence of god-lists and hyphenated divine names, evidence suggests that Aegean and Near Eastern gods continued to maintain their individuality.

Even if we accept the proposed parallels as explanations for the hellenistic practice, the issue of shared taxonomy remains. We do not know what criteria Hellenes considered when linking their native gods to non-native names. Was it their perceived functions, attributes, cosmological associations, or their relative ranks in their respective pantheons? Would such equations have functioned also in Aegean lands? And if so, why were Hellenes drawn to the worship of foreign gods (e.g., Isis, Horus, Osiris) on their own soil? Was it because they were not tied to the economic and nationalistic interests of the Aegean city-states in which they took root? And how did such ''translations'' account for local variations within pantheons? Exactly whose pantheon was being equated? Near East divine hierarchies often significantly differed from locale to locale and from one era to another. Even when gods of the same name were worshiped in different places (e.g., Baal/Bel or Ishtar/Astarte) their cults and relationships to their pantheons could be very different. Thus at Sidon, the goddess Astarte was paired with Eshmun, at Tyre she was Melqart's wife, but at Carthage Baal-Hamon was coupled with Tinit. Such local variations underscore the difficulties that must have been present already in antiquity with making clear equations between Aegean and Near Eastern deities.

The practice of *interpretatio* offers just one demonstration of the difficulties scholars face when trying to ascertain the preconditions that make the transmission of religious ideas possible. These difficulties are only compounded when we consider that every element that entered Aegean religion from the Near East must have been facilitated by its own set of social, economic, political, and historical preconditions.

Monotheisms, Monolatries, Henotheisms, and Polytheisms

If one reads early works on ancient Near Eastern religion one often finds rather "black and white" descriptions of ancient belief systems. Typically, one finds monotheism, the belief in and worship of one god, starkly contrasted with polytheism, the belief in and worship of many gods. Representing monotheism, of course, was ancient Israel. Representing polytheism was essentially every other culture of antiquity. In addition, polytheism and monotheism often were portrayed as existing in an evolutionary relationship to one another, with monotheism (hence also Judaism and eventually Christianity) representing the rather unique end of the line and, consequently, the more morally and ethically advanced of the two systems.

Recent decades, however, have seen major changes in the way scholars think about ancient Near Eastern religions. Ancient Israel, for one, is now seen as a largely polytheistic society (Zevit 2001), whose early religious history was marked by monolatry, the worship of one god, but belief in the existence of many (Rendsburg 1995). Only during and after the Babylonian exile (586 BC) did a small circle of Judahite elites maintain absolute monotheism, perhaps under the influence of Zoroastrianism. Moreover, as we now know, pre-exilic Israelite religions also were influenced by Syro-Canaanite and Assyrian traditions (Mullen 1980; M. Smith 1990, 2001, 2003; Stern 2003). Early efforts to account for Israelite monotheism by attributing it to the influence of the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten (Freud 1939) have, for the most part, been abandoned.

Our understanding of Egyptian and Mesopotamian polytheism also has become more sophisticated (Hornung 1971; Lambert 1975). Far from defining these belief systems merely as the worship of many gods, scholars are now referring to them as types of "complex polytheism" or henotheism, in which many (even all) gods can be contained in, conceived as, or represented by a single god. Often this god is believed to be the creator of the others and stands at the top of a well-developed hierarchy. But this is not always the case. In Egypt, for example, the word "god" in the abstract (*nṯr*) could refer to any god that one was addressing at a particular time, and that god, regardless of his or her rank in the pantheon, could simultaneously stand in for others invoked by the supplicant. In essence, a god could be one thing and also another. Gods also could be represented in multiple ways (e.g., anthropomorphically zoomorphically, or symbolically) without theological compromise. Thus Thoth, the patron god of the scribes and "magic," could be represented as a human figure with the head of an ibis or as a divine baboon even if it was believed that he had mortal origins (Hodge 2004). In addition, throughout the Near East ancients made no distinction between a god and the physical properties or phenomena that a god embodied (e.g., sun, moon, wind).

These aspects of Near Eastern polytheism/henotheism complicate the way we think about the westward diffusion of Near Eastern cults precisely because they raise questions of taxonomy. Again, the topic of *interpretatio* illustrates this well. What does it mean, for example, for Hellenes in Egypt to equate Zeus with Amun, and not with Re, when Amun in his native system can represent the cultic and local

manifestation of Re and/or all other Egyptian gods? Did Hellenes know this or did they posit their equations based solely on a superficial understanding of the Amun cult? And if the understanding is superficial, then the process of *interpretatio* can hardly represent the actual cultic practices of Hellenes on foreign soil. If they were aware of the subtleties of indigenous forms of worship, then what does this tell us about the nature of their own belief system(s)? In what ways were the differences between hellenistic polytheism and Egyptian henotheism mediated? Some have attempted to contextualize the process of *interpretatio* by suggesting that the hellenistic period was a time in which individual gods and goddesses were being increasingly relegated to relativistic notions of the universality of divinity. The late antique development of a belief in a universal Highest Being (Greek *hypsistos*) who embodies all other gods (native and foreign) is sometimes seen as having stemmed from the practice of *interpretatio*, and to be sure the name by which one calls a god appears to have been irrelevant to some Greeks and Romans (Assmann 2004:27). Some have understood the belief in a Highest Being as a move towards monotheism (Mikalson 2005:202). Others have suggested that it tallies with attempts to create greater political unity (Fowden 1993). Nevertheless, the developmental relationship between *hypsistos* and *interpretatio* is by no means certain, and it remains to be articulated how a belief in a *hypsistos* differs from the various henotheistic systems of the ancient Near East.

If the process of *interpretatio* (or perhaps the contemporary study of it) obscures anything, it is the fact that not all polytheistic/henotheistic systems are the same. In some cases the differences may be as profound as those that distinguish one contemporary form of monotheism from another. Even a religious system like Zoroastrianism, which is often labeled "dualist," defies our ability to apply this label consistently. Its sacred texts (the Avestas) may be read as supporting monotheism, dualism, and even polytheism (Stausberg 2004:204).

Moreover, each of the gods in any polytheistic or henotheistic system exists not in a vacuum, but in an ongoing dialectical relationship to the larger pantheon. The gods' relationships to one another in part define them. In the Near East these relationships are primarily kinship-based (i.e., gods are fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons, daughters), but they are not all identical in every locale. The goddesses of Anatolia, for example, appear to have enjoyed equal status with gods. Thus the Hittites often addressed their prayers to the daughters of gods who were expected to intercede on their behalf (Hoffner 1995:566–77). In addition, divine kinship relations are contextualized by social structures that mirror the political systems in which the religions exist, whether monarchies (Israel, Mesopotamia, Anatolia) or democracies (Athens). Nevertheless, some social structures, such as the divine assembly, appear in different political systems (Ugarit, Mesopotamia, Athens). Until scholars factor into their comparisons the subtle differences that exist between ancient polytheisms/henotheisms, our ability to ascertain what preconditions enabled any hellenistic "translation" will remain limited.

"Greek religion and the ancient Near East" is a complex subject. While classicists and scholars of the Near East have already shed an incredible amount of light on the subject, future researchers are still left with many puzzles to solve. Our inability to define the relationship between myths and rituals makes it difficult to determine its relative value for the comparative study of Near Eastern and Aegean religions. The

difficulties in establishing the exact vehicles for the exchange of religious ideas, especially as one moves into the more remote past, provide little more than plausible models for transmission. Further, the ever-growing list of parallels between Aegean and Near Eastern texts and religious practices only underscores the need to establish what shared taxonomies and conditions made their transmission possible. Moreover, the complex and often subtle differences that distinguish one polytheistic or henotheist religion from another make such an investigation far more difficult. The four problems surveyed above only scratch the surface when it comes to the difficulties that confront scholars engaged in the comparative study of ancient Mediterranean religions. Nevertheless, it is in grappling with such challenges that scholarship moves forward. Indeed, as archaeologists continue to unearth new finds and as textual research on the topic continues, we shall be in a better position to tackle such challenges, especially if we do so with interdisciplinary dialogue and goals.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For general discussions of this subject, see Adkins and Adkins 1996, Black and Green 1992, Hallo and Younger 1997–2002, Keel and Uehlinger 1998, Toorn, Horst, and Becking 1999. For Anatolia see D.P. Wright 2004a; for Egypt, Assmann 2004, Hornung 1971, Kákosy 1995, Velde 2003; for Israel, Collins 2004, Niditch 1997; for Syro-Canaan, Caquot 1980, Toorn 1995, D.P. Wright 2004b; for Mesopotamia, Beaulieu 2004, Bottéro 1992, 2001, Lambert 1968, 1975, Livingstone 1997, Wiggermann 1995.

PART II

The Powers: The Gods and the Dead

CHAPTER TWO

Olympian Gods, Olympian Pantheon

Ken Dowden

The Nature of Gods

Amongst the many creations of Greek culture, the Olympian gods have a particular interest. As with anything in the ancient world, we have various types of information about them. Some comes from archaeology, some from texts, some concerns history, some concerns thought. But whereas the great sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi was, and is, real, and we discover about *the same* sanctuary from our various sources of information, it is different with the individual gods. The ancient gods are not real – at least, that is the general supposition – and what our evidence leads us to is pictures that peoples created in their minds and shared in their imaginations. The gods are in fact the most powerful work of art created by the Greeks. And they live in different, but intersecting, dimensions, which combine to create the illusion of a single personality.

The primary dimension is that of cult (religious practice). Greeks prayed, sacrificed, poured libations, held festivals, demarcated places which would be precincts, built altars and temples, gave gifts and built "treasuries" to hold them all. In doing all this they represented themselves as performing acts to, for, or at least with an audience of, gods. It is far from unusual to have many gods ("polytheism") or to think of them somehow as persons. But by the standards of other nations, Greek gods were exceptionally anthropomorphic – they were "shaped like people." The focus of Greek worship tended not to be mighty stones or trees ("aniconic," non-representational, objects of worship), though they admired those too, but stone or wood shaped into statues of personal gods. Each god was an individual person and each was thought of as having their particular identity.

Different Greek cities or *ethnē* (peoples who were not yet urbanized) worshiped broadly similar gods to each other. But the system was far from uniform and the Zeus imagined in one place might be rather different from the Zeus imagined in another.

Indeed, in a single place you might worship a variety of Zeuses, distinguished by their *epithets* – so Zeus "Meilichios," Zeus the dangerous but hopefully "gentle," is a different business from Zeus "Olympios," the Zeus who is king of the gods on Mount Olympus. Each Olympian god is particularized by epithets, which are a bit of a compromise: they maintain a single identity (of Zeus), but diffract it into a rich spectrum of locations, functions, and traditions.

The second dimension is that of mythology. Myths might be local and might present for instance a supposed *reason* for a current religious practice, when they are described as "aetiological." This would not be an actual, historical reason, because myths are no more true than gods are real. They are a way of thinking about the world around us and the people in it. It is in the nature of the worship of the Greek gods to generate myths, and it is in the nature of poets, the entertainers of Greek culture, to collect them and synthesize them into a compromise set of stories that develop shared ideas of what the gods are like and how they behave. The principal Greek myths are widely known in ancient Greece and find their place in epics, lyric poetry, drama, and all manner of cultural production. They are everywhere in Greek art too.

The third dimension is that of thought about gods and the divine, "theology." But Greece did not have official theologians: what it had was poets, philosophers, and anyone else who was prepared to think. Here finally we may worry about how the universe is run and speculate on the justice or the goodness of the gods. It is at this point that personal gods have their weakest grip and abstraction sets in most easily.

So, to take the major cult site of Zeus in the Peloponnese, the huge temple of Zeus at Olympia (built for cult, decorated with myth) provokes reflection on his power (theology). The ceremonies and celebrations enact that power with grandeur and significance, and in so doing focus something of Greek identity onto this site. This happens explicitly once every four years and implicitly, through memory and monuments, at all times in between, as this is always the place that carries the history of the ritual and its apparently limitless future. The huge altar of ashes grows with this year's offerings; and the animals sacrificed in large number to the god, awesomely struck down and wailed over, give their lifeblood not to us but (back) to the god. This is the "same" Zeus whom Homer celebrates in the *Iliad*, mighty, remote, never actually walking the earth, distributing human happiness and misery, deciding the end of everything, including us. But he also behaves in ways that are harder to understand: he is said to have flung the god Hephaestus from heaven to land on Lemnos where the worship of the god of fire can take place; he argues with his wife (for why else should their marriage need to be renewed annually?); he is seduced by her on Mount Ida, in a scene presented rather daringly or wickedly by the poet. At Olympia we will also look forward to the traditional ritual song celebrating his thunderbolt, and we will think, as we look to the sky in prayer, about that great being whose justice is so hard to grasp, as Aeschylus showed us in his last plays – the *Agamemnon* and the *Prometheus Bound* (if it is by him). And as we look at the temple's sculptures, we see a mythology surrounding Zeus – a pediment showing the chariot race of Pelops for the hand of Hippodameia, a pediment displaying Zeus's son Apollo bringing order to Centaurs and Lapiths, and the metopes displaying the work of another of his sons, Heracles, founder of the Olympic Games, namely his twelve labors to civilize the world and overcome the adversity that Zeus's wife Hera had put in his path. Zeus himself once again is mysteriously absent from these scenes, but we may reflect upon

his world order and then enter the temple to see what came to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the huge enthroned Zeus by Pheidias, a statue which changed the path of Greek art.

Greek gods may not be neatly packaged, but that helps them to provoke thought as we bring together ideas from all the different places where we encounter them – participating in cult, watching cult, seeing the myth depicted, hearing it acted out, listening to it sung. You could only emerge humbled from the experience of Zeus.

The Twelve Olympian Gods, the "Pantheon"

A pantheon ("all-gods") is the set of gods that any individual culture possesses, and because they are personal gods they will tend to form a family. In modern treatments these tend to be formalized as the *twelve* Olympian gods: Zeus and Hera, Poseidon and Demeter, Apollo and Artemis, Ares and Aphrodite, Hermes and Athene, Hephaestus and Hestia. Which unfortunately leaves out Dionysus – so sometimes Hestia is relegated. Unfortunately again, this does not take account of Heracles, who becomes an Olympian god (Herodotus 2.44), joining his new wife Hebe ("Youthfulness") on Olympus – so she was an Olympian too. It also leaves out deities such as the Muses and Graces who are assuredly Olympian goddesses:

> *Mousai Olympiades, kourai Dios aigiochoio*
> "Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus"
> Hesiod *Theogony* 52

It is therefore not a straightforward matter of fact that there were twelve Olympian gods. The Greek gods of cult and of mythology were quite numerous and various. Nonetheless, the attempt to create a twelve-strong pantheon began as early as the sixth century BC at both Olympia and Athens.

First, Olympia. The "Homeric" *Hymn to Hermes* (500 BC, plus or minus) sets Hermes on the banks of the river Alpheius, evidently at Olympia, where he divides a sacrifice into twelve portions for the gods (line 128; cf. Cassola 1975:174). And in an ode to be sung at Olympia Pindar recalls Heracles sacrificing by the Alpheius to the "Twelve Lord Gods" (*Olympian* 10.49) as he founded the cult site of Olympia. Herodorus of Heracleia, an author of around 400 BC, gave more detail:

> When he [Heracles] came to Elis, he founded the shrine at Olympia of Zeus Olympios and named the place Olympia after the god. He sacrificed to him there and to the other gods, setting up altars, six in number, shared by the twelve gods: first the altar of Zeus Olympios, whom he had share with Poseidon; second of Hera and Athene; third of Hermes and Apollo; fourth of the Graces and Dionysus; fifth of Artemis and Alpheius; sixth of Cronus and Rhea. (Herodorus of Heracleia, *FGrH* 31 F34a)

This is an influential story, as can be seen from its (brief) incorporation into Apollodorus' *Library of Mythology* (2.7.2). Archaeology has not revealed these altars, but there is no reason not to believe in them. This gives us yet another selection of twelve, including a couple of gods from the earlier generation (Cronus and Rhea). Whether

or not the cult at Olympia was where the idea of twelve gods took fixed form, it was certainly in at the beginning.

This pairing and gathering of the gods, and indeed their "twelveness" (with Dionysus not Hestia) can be seen at Athens on the east frieze of the Parthenon (ca. 440/435 BC) and it has a long history at Athens too, one which has in the end provided our idea of which gods constitute the twelve. Thucydides (6.54.6–7) tells us that Pisistratus the Younger founded an altar of the twelve gods in the agora as early as 522/1 BC. And clearly this became an idea of the sort of thing that was done early in any Greek town – Deucalion, the Greek Noah, was supposed to have established one in Thessaly (Hellanikos, *FGrH* 4 fr. 6a–b; cf. Long 1987:153). The Athenian altar was so focal that distances to other places were measured from it. And by the time of Plato the idea of the twelve gods was so well established that in his last great work, the *Laws* (ca. 350 BC), he prescribes that there will be twelve festivals to the twelve gods, one per month (800b–c). It is interesting that Herodotus had traced the twelve gods back to a (non-existent) set of twelve Egyptian month-gods (2.4.1, 2.82.1). This sort of orientalizing notion may have contributed to Plato's view.

We can see, then, how a notion of the twelve gods took final shape in Greek culture as it assumed its definitive, classical, form. In the same way, in other cultures that had been influential on the development of Greek civilization in the centuries before the classical period, the cultures of the Near East and of Asia Minor, poets and priests had formed ideas of which particular gods were important in their society as a whole and not just in this or that town, though admittedly without arriving at a set of twelve (a Hittite example of twelve minor gods – Long 1987:144 – is engaging but irrelevant). The Greeks certainly did not have a priestly caste, but they made up for this with their poets, who must in the period ca. 1200–600 BC have constructed a religion that all Greek audiences anywhere could sign up to at their religious festivals or other celebrations. This was a market necessity and was probably done as much instinctively as deliberately.

Herodotus (2.51–3) captures something of this with his story from the oracular site of Dodona about the Pelasgians, a pre-people whose only function is to be the raw material that existed in Greece before the Greeks. The Pelasgians, the story goes, had no names for their gods and in fact learnt them from the Egyptians. Then the Greeks got these names from the Pelasgians and only later learnt which god had begotten which other god and what the functions of each god were, thanks to the poems of Hesiod and Homer. This story is effectively a myth about things that matter in religion, depicting them as only gradually emerging. However, it recognizes and highlights the key role of the poets in systematizing the gods, and the influence of other cultures, longer established than that of the Greeks.

So, by say the seventh century BC, poets had put together genealogies (family trees) of the gods, which are called "theogonies" (accounts of which god begat which), and of heroes, who formed that middle ground between god and man. In this way, mythology is organized, just as in schools today the construction of genealogical charts of gods and heroes turns raw data into satisfying order. From the particular *Theogony* of Hesiod we learn how in the beginning there was "Chaos and Erebos and black Night" (123; cf. Genesis 1) and later (454–7) how Cronus bore the principal Olympian gods Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus. Other poets were doing theogonies too – Homer, for instance, knows of a version, where,

Table 2.1 Olympian gods in Homer

Olympian god	*Iliad*	*Odyssey*
Zeus (& Kronides & Kronion)	482 (& 37 & 49)	221 (& 7 & 24)
Athene	163	161
Ares (& Enyalios)	141 (& 8)	14
Apollo (& just Phoibos)	130 (& 6)	28
Hera	121	7
Poseidon	44	42
Hephaestus	41	19
Iris	40	–
Aphrodite (& Kypris)	30 (& 6)	12
Hermes	17	22
Artemis	12	15
Leto	12	3
Demeter	4	1
Dionysus	3	2
Dione	2	–
Eileithyia	1	1

very close to Akkadian mythology, "Ocean and mother Tethys" are the "begetting of the gods" (*Iliad* 14.201).

This way the poets establish an agreed sense of who matters amongst the gods and where they fit in the notional history and family tree of heaven. This can be seen from Homer, who deals with a particular range of Olympians, as is shown in table 2.1, giving the number of mentions of each. Some of the priorities are of course occasioned by the story or other accidents, but the picture painted is not so far from a recognizable pantheon of twelve. And when the gods come out to fight each other (*Iliad* 20.67–74), they are of course drawn up in pairs: Poseidon and Apollo, Enyalios (Ares) and Athene, Hera and Artemis, Leto and Hermes, Hephaestus and the river Xanthos. This makes a total of ten, again not so far from a regular later pantheon (though Xanthos is inventive and Leto surprising). And sculptors for their part are only poets in stone, when they depict Olympians in a group, as for instance on the east frieze of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi with its neatly ordered and subtly varied enthroned gods (before 525 BC). This may not be twelve gods two by two, but it is not far from it.

So, by the time we reach the classical age there is a sense of a pantheon of twelve, even if details might vary. And some order has been brought to the chaos that is Greek religion, at least for the purposes of drama, narrative, and the world of ideas.

The Myths and Functions of the Gods

Every locale had its stories of the gods, not in isolation but relative to the landscape and the people of old, perhaps heroes, that had lived in it. Greece does not bother much with creations and ends of the world, except at a sort of philosophical level. So Zeus is not a creator god. And indeed the Olympians are in mythology a relatively

new regime: before them there had been the Titans, and at the beginning there was either Ocean (as in Homer) or Chaos ("the Gap") – both of them probably Near Eastern imports. You read Hesiod's *Theogony* for this back story of the gods, for a sense of where the present order of gods came from. And he may tell you in the *Works and Days* that we live in very fallen times, in the Age of Iron, but most Greeks, whilst admitting, as all traditional societies do, that values were enshrined in their elders and ancestors, thought mainly about the present, and it was in the present that Zeus and the Olympians ruled.

Simple books and web pages will list you the Olympians' functions. Zeus is the king of the gods and the god of the sky. Hera is the goddess of marriage. Ares is the god of war. Poseidon is the god of the sea, and earthquakes. Demeter is the goddess of corn and fertility. Aphrodite is the goddess of sex. Artemis is the goddess of the hunt. Dionysus is the god of wine and madness. Apollo is the god of law and of order, music and literature, divination and oracles (but emphatically not god of the sun). Hestia is the goddess of the hearth. Hermes is the messenger god, and god of travelers and traders. Hephaestus is the god of smiths and in a sense of fire.

These are tidy roles for our principal gods and provide a way of understanding their community. Delightful use can be made of such roles by poets, as when the *Iliad*'s Aphrodite is wounded for being so foolish as to partake in battle (5.428), and its Ares, because he personifies the evil of war, is loathed by other characters. Apollo can decline to take part in a battle because he has a superior mentality and is more acutely conscious of the special status of god relative to man (*Iliad* 21.461–7).

And this is a tradition which continues, especially in lighter vein, to be exploited throughout antiquity and on into the medieval and modern European tradition. A particular source for the lighter approach is Ovid's wickedly ingenious Roman epic, the *Metamorphoses* (complete by AD 8), a work which was to become, as is sometimes said, the "bible" of European painting. Here Jupiter (Zeus) smites the wicked Lycaon, king of Arcadia, who tried to feed him human flesh, and turns him into a wolf. Apollo seeks to rape the nymph Daphne, but she can only turn into a laurel and be appropriated by him as his special tree. Jupiter falls in love with Io, but regrettably is obliged to transform her into a cow owing to the jealousy of his wife Juno (Hera). And he fares no better with Callisto, who is converted into a bear by Diana (Artemis) owing to her pregnancy. And then there are Semele and Danaë: Semele tricked by Juno into making the fatal request that Jupiter should appear to her in his real form, the lightning; Danaë locked in a tower only to be impregnated by Jupiter in the form of golden rain. These stories from the first few books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* have entranced us all and form that central core of what mythology means to us. But they are of course the tip of an iceberg and are themselves culturally transformed from local stories told for a reason into the rich symphony of classical culture.

From there this view continues strongly as Christianity supersedes the religious dimension of the pagan gods – thus what remains for the pagan gods is principally the decorative dimension, myth and its representation. So in European culture, particularly painting and opera, the gods are strongly functional and conventional. As a result, given that most of us come to Greek religion via Greek mythology, our perceptions are shaped by this view and almost all the basic books and web pages peddle this colorful and historically influential, if not very religious, view of ancient gods.

The Diversity and Origins of the Gods

The different functions of the gods, though suggestively combined, are largely the product of historical accident, and so are the gods themselves, as emerges when we consider the principal god of the various Greek cities. Why is Zeus not worshiped as the chief god in all Greek cities? It is Athene that is the principal god for the Athenians, Zeus for the city-less inhabitants of southern Arcadia, and Apollo for the rather tribal Aetolians at their central religious site of Thermon. Hera is met as the city goddess in some parts of the Peloponnese and its colonies (e.g. Samos) but not elsewhere: the goddess looks as though she is geographically restricted – did she originally belong to the previous settlers of the Peloponnese, or to the particular Greek tribes that settled in the Peloponnese? Artemis is the principal divinity of Ephesus (she is Diana in Latin) but the multiple breasts with which she is depicted and the fierce devotion she attracts point to her continuing an earlier tradition of the region.

So, Greek religion as we see it in the classical and later ages is an inherited and updated amalgam of all sorts of valued practices and beliefs. Pagans are great hoarders of traditions, theirs and the traditions of others that they encounter and think authoritative or powerful – particularly if it is necessary for confidence in their control of a new environment. And the application of a "Greek" god-name is always an approximate business, as we can see from the cult of Aphrodite at Locri as the goddess of death.

Gods move as populations move. Zeus Olympios is Zeus from Mount Olympus, king of the Olympian gods in their Olympian home. Olympus is the name of several mountains in Greece, but also of one in particular, on the borders of Thessaly and Macedonia, one of the early homelands of mythologizing Greeks, who like the founders of cities in the USA brought familiar place names with them. From its shape, the word Olympus does not, however, look like a word the Greeks brought with them to Thessaly in the first place. Indeed, they seem uncertain at times whether it is the name of that mountain or in fact a word for the sky. Homer does his best to keep them separate in the *Iliad*. At 15.192, in the division of sky, sea, and "misty gloom" between Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, it is said that "the earth and long Olympus are common" to all three. This is evidently the mountain range, the particular earth that is special to the gods. And at 5.748–56 the Horai (Seasons) are the gatekeepers that open the gates for Hera to enter Olympus from the sky and park her horses there in order to talk to Zeus, who is sitting comfortably on the highest, but revealingly most distant, peak. Elsewhere, in the *Odyssey* and after Homer, Olympus comes to mean also "the sky." From this perspective it does not matter whether you call the gods Ouraniōnes (those of the sky) or Olympioi, and since Mount Olympus in any case "glints," it is conventionally *aiglēeis*. These gods of the bright element are then to be contrasted with the powers below, who are *chthonioi* ("chthonic"), meaning that their power resides in the earth and concerns the dead buried beneath it and the negotiation of the boundaries of death and life. This is not a cut-and-dried distinction: the Olympian Hades is king of the underworld, and Hermes communicates with the world of the dead and may be invoked in "black" magic – no surprise that Priam encounters him, traveling by night across the river to the deathly camp of Achilles in *Iliad* 24.

The Olympians, then, have a home, associated in part with a mountain in northern Greece, but where did they actually come from? There are some clues but few answers. Zeus himself has the same name (allowing for the drifting apart of speech, first into dialects, then into separate languages) as the Germanic *Tiwaz (as in our word Tuesday) or the Sanskrit (Indian) Dyāuḥ, or the Latin (Roman) Jupiter/Jove. So he goes back to before Greeks were Greeks, to an Indo-European god of the sky and of light thousands of years earlier. His son might possibly once have been Dionysus, in a language quite close to Greek (*Dios-synos*, "Zeus's son," with the *s* and *n* transposed?). Semele too, his mother, might just have been "she of the earth," i.e. an earth goddess, in a neighboring language (comparison has been made with *zemlya*, the Russian for "earth," though its *–l-* is secondary; but the *–l-* may be the adjectival ending, as in the Greek word *chthamalos*, "of the ground," which may be the corresponding word in Greek itself).

Demeter, originally Dāmātēr, looks as though she should be the earth or corn "mother," but the *Dā-* is hard to manage. Poseidon, originally Poteidāōn, appears to be the "husband of Dā," and indeed his worship is associated with that of Demeter in Arcadia. Elsewhere in the Peloponnese, "Hera" looks like a title, a feminine equivalent of "hero," perhaps in origin a term like "Potnia," "Powerful," used in historic times to invoke goddesses such as Hera, Aphrodite, Demeter, Athene and so on, but sufficient on its own to name the goddess, as it had been long ago in the Bronze Age Linear B script of the Greek palace society.

Unless Apollo's name comes from the *apella*, a term used in several states to denote a gathering of the male warrior citizens, we do not know where it comes from, but some of his functions – particularly those of plague and arrows – look like the functions of a Phoenician god Resheph. Some of his other associations, with prophecy, altered consciousness, and purification may belong in the same part of the world (West 1997:55).

Aphrodite, delightfully portrayed by Hesiod as emerging from the "foam" (*aphros*) issuing from the severed sexual organs of Uranus (Sky) as they floated in the sea, may actually be the way Greeks got their mouths round some form of the Phoenician goddess Astarte, and her descent from Uranus explains her cult as Aphrodite Urania, in fact a version of Astarte's cult title "Queen of Heaven" (West 1997:56–7). Her epithet "Kythereia" may have nothing to do with her cult on the island of Kythera but in fact relate to a god of craftsmen, Kothar in Ugaritic (an early language of Phoenicia), explaining her strange marriage to Hephaestus (*Odyssey* 8.266–366), though her epithet Kypris ("of Cyprus") does indeed refer to that island where Phoenician and Greek culture met.

Others are much harder. Athānā, as Athene originally was, looks by its structure (a-thā-nā) non-Greek. Artemis and Hermes it is hard to believe anything about – though it is strange that revered wayside heaps of stones were called *hermaia*.

Insofar as we can say anything about the origins of the gods, what this all reinforces is a sense of how Greek gods were gathered from different sources at different times and underwent periodic renewal in the light of new religious encounters. This produces the remarkably varied and yet unified amalgam displayed by Greeks gods. We will look at two of them here.

Apollo

Whether or not Apollo is, as is sometimes romantically said, "the most Greek of all the gods," he is certainly a remarkable and ambitious construct. Depicted as a youth, with "uncut hair" (*Iliad* 20.39), he is like Achilles, who is keeping his hair long, ready to cut it, in a passage rite, for the river Spercheius. Apollo is thus a guardian of youth at the moment of transition to full adulthood. Yet he is also the god that kills Achilles, just as Artemis is responsible for the death by sacrifice of Iphigeneia (unless she saves her) and is also in some versions responsible for the death and transformation of Callisto. And just as we can find a figure Artemis Iphigeneia, so we can find Apollo identified with another dead youth as Apollo Hyacinthus (Farnell 1896–1909:4.125). In this environment Apollo seems to have a key role in the definition of society. This role is found even more strongly when his cult, as we have seen, turns out to be the central cult of the assembled Aetolians at Thermon, and the *apella* from which his name might derive. Similarly, the cult of Apollo Karneios is so fundamental to Dorian Greeks that Thucydides even calls the late summer month Karneios, in which the festival, the Karneia, was held, a "sacred month of the Dorians" (Thucydides 5.54.2; so too Pausanias 3.13.4; cf. Nilsson 1906:118–20). Indeed, it was precisely because the Spartans were engaged in the Karneia that they could not come to help the Athenians against the Persians at Marathon (490 BC; Herodotus 6.106), or send Leonidas sufficient forces in time at Thermopylai (480 BC; Herodotus 7.206). The epithet Karneios was said to be derived from *kraneia*, a "cornel-tree," but it is usually thought that Apollo has merged with himself an earlier god Karnos.

The gods are constantly depicted as sexual predators. However, in the case of gods sex always leads to children and the purpose of the myth is usually to inscribe an ancestry in myth. Pindar sings how Evadne lived by the river Alpheius:

> Reared there, she first touched sweet
> Aphrodite at the hands of Apollo.
> *Olympian* 6.35

Her mortal father is Aepytus, though really her father was the god Poseidon. He now proceeds to Delphi to ask the oracle (of Apollo!) who is the father of Evadne's child. Meanwhile Apollo sends Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth, and the Fates (Moirai) to ease the birth. Aepytus, returning, announces that the father is indeed Apollo and that the child "would be the most outstanding seer to human beings." And so it turns out, for the child, Iamus, is the founder of a major clan of prophets, the Iamids, at Olympia. The divine intrudes in this way into the world of men: the mysteries of sex and the survival of birth-pangs reflect divine forces; the oracle provides answers to the problems mortal vision cannot on its own resolve; the god bestows, or originates, the gift of prophecy, a gift which reaches into the present day. Myth accounts for the presence of seers today, but it says something about the nature of prophecy too. Local myth builds on the existing portrait of the god in order to add to it.

Apollo may also be a god of plague, striking men down with his arrows – in *Iliad* 1 or in the *Oedipus the King* of Sophocles. This seems to be what he is when he is called

on by the priest Chryses as "Smintheus" (mouse-god). If you are suffering from a plague, you need divine assistance and, though others provided oracles – notably Zeus at Dodona, or the hero Trophonius at Lebadeia (Boeotia) – Apollo is normally responsible for oracles and prophets. Apollo Pythios is the god of answers to questions (*pyth-*, to question), especially at his Delphic cult site with its priestess, the Pythia, and its legend of a snake called Python slain by Apollo. This is the mythical creature from which our word "python" comes, a word first applied to Indian boa constrictors in the 1830s. So you know, when you find a statue of Apollo Pythios at Athens or an altar at Olympia or a temple, regrettably in ruins, in northern Arcadia, that this Delphic Apollo is the Apollo we are talking about (Pausanias 1.19.1, 5.15.4, 8.15.5), and we can see that this variety of Apollo is specially influential. He possesses prophetesses, or causes them to go into a trance, as in the case of Sibyls and the Pythia, who is in effect the Delphic version of a Sibyl. Every Greek state and individual recognized the special power of the oracle at Delphi, though its historical performance was not always very satisfactory – as Croesus king of Lydia discovered to his cost when he was defeated by King Cyrus of Persia (Herodotus 1, esp. 91) and as the Athenians discovered when they sought advice during the invasion of Xerxes (Herodotus 7.142–4). The oracular function is a unique way of crossing the divide between man and god and makes Apollo very special amongst the gods. And so the final silence of his oracle was thought to denote the death of paganism itself, when the last pagan emperor, Julian (AD 361–3) sent his friend Oreibasius to consult it:

> Tell the Emperor: the crafted hall has fallen to the ground;
> Phoebus no longer has his hut, nor his prophetic laurel,
> nor the chattering spring – the chattering water too is quenched.
> (John Damascene, *The Passion of the Great Martyr Artemios* 35 = *Greek Anthology*, appendix, Oracles, 122)

Delphi was a special holy place of Apollo, to which Greeks might turn as something between pilgrims and tourists, as for instance do the Chorus of Euripides' *Ion*, another story of a major son of Apollo, the founder of the Ionian Greeks. But Delphi was not the only place specially sacred to Apollo: nothing, after all, was more special than the island of Delos, cult centre of the Ionians, where he and his sister Artemis were born to Leto "gripping the slender palm tree with her hands" (Theognis 6).

Oracles issue a sort of higher regulation, or sense of order or law, for men. The word for law in Greek is *nomos*, which happens also to be a word referring to melody, and to pasturing. By a strange sort of punning, whether it is historical accident or deeper reality, various quite different functions of Apollo are brought together under his epithet Nomios: god of the oracle and of regulation and good order, god of music and of culture – the companions of the Muses, and in places a god of flocks, as when in mythology he tended the flocks of King Admetus (Farnell 1896–1909:4.123). As we look more deeply into his music we will, however, recognize that his instrument, the lyre (which is not without its resemblance to his bow), represents in itself a demonstration of order. This leads also to the mystic science of the interrelation between music and mathematics, a special study of Pythagoras (ca. 540 BC) and his

followers. Pythagoras was closely associated with Apollo – indeed he was his son, some said. But one can also take a deep breath and reach the insight of a Walter Otto:

> The chaotic must take shape, the turbulent must be reduced to time and measure, opposites must be wedded in harmony. This music is thus the great educator, the sources and symbol of all order in the world and in the life of mankind. Apollo the musician is identical with the founder of ordinances, identical with him who knows what is right, what is necessary, what is to be. In this accuracy of the god's aim Hölderlin could still recognize the archer . . . (Otto 1954:77)

Artemis

Artemis is the sister of Apollo. This bond in mythic genealogy results from their association in cult. Here we can observe the special role of Delos, where both were born to Leto, as we have seen, and where both had a temple in the same precinct, as did Zeus and Hera at Olympia. This contrasts markedly with Delphi, which is exclusively Apollo's site (except that Dionysus shares it during the winter months).

In the mythology, Artemis is a huntress, accompanied by the nymphs. Hunting is, however, in reality a man's pursuit and a dangerous one, pursued in wild and uninhabited places. Myth tells of boar hunts, notably that of Meleager, and warriors in Homer and in the Mycenaean age could wear a boar's tusk helmet. Odysseus had a wound from a boar hunt in which he had engaged at adolescence whilst under the tutelage of his maternal grandfather, and in historical times no Macedonian noble might become a man until he had slain his first boar. Why then is a virgin goddess hunting in the wilds with nubile (but untouchable) teenage goddesses? And why is it that the nubile maiden Iphigeneia must be sacrificed to her at Aulis, or swapped for a deer, and why is it that Callisto in Arcadia must be turned into a bear? The myths bring together themes of importance for the dynamics of a successful society. It is only through confrontation with the wild, if usually in myth rather than cult, and through a dangerous but protected transition, where their normal roles are inverted, that girls can become tamed in subjection to men through the institution of marriage. A similar logic pervades the mythology of the Amazons, where the transitional independence of young women is marked even more strongly by their impossible characterization as warriors. Artemis, then, is the goddess of the transition, a transition in which men have no part – as is shown by the myth of Actaeon, torn apart by his own hounds as a result of witnessing Artemis and the nymphs, a forbidden mystery. She completes this transition as Artemis Locheia, to whom women may appeal and childbirth and in whose shrine they may gratefully hang up clothing as a thank-offering, their transition to womanhood complete.

Artemis is accordingly the goddess at Brauron, a moist, marshy place at the coastal fringes of Attica where Athenian girls' rites are practiced. The place itself has a "marginal" feel, an almost eerie combination of fertility and remoteness. At Patrae too, the priestess of the major cult of Artemis Triclaria was a girl, who retained that priesthood until she married (Pausanias 7.19). Here there were grim tales that the most attractive boy and girl had been sacrificed to Artemis annually, owing to an adolescent pair, Melanippus and Comaetho, prematurely having had sex in the

shrine. At Halae in Attica the cult of Artemis Tauropolos saw a mock-human sacrifice every year, associated with how – at least in Euripides' *Iphigeneia amongst the Tauri* – Orestes had almost been sacrificed by Artemis' priestess, his sister Iphigeneia. Everywhere we see the goddess angered, often in the wild or in connection with an animal (a deer or a bear), and often demanding human sacrifices that somehow never seem actually to have happened at any point where there is historical evidence. What matters is the image and the ideology, in which the god consists, winding in and out of Greek mythology and crossing cult sites, some active (Brauron), some lost in the mists of time (Aulis).

Related to these phenomena are the cults we find at the mouth of the Alpheius, a river whose plan to take her virginity had been foiled by a girls' ritual in which Artemis and the nymphs all smeared their faces with mud during an all-night festival. Here the river flows grandly on from Olympia and reaches the final stages of its path to the sea:

> At its mouth, around 80 stades [12.5 km] from Olympia, is the grove of Artemis Alpheionia or Alpheiousa [i.e., Artemis of the Alpheius] – it is said both ways. There is a grand festival [*panēgyris*] to this goddess at Olympia annually, just as there is to Elaphia [Artemis of Deer] and Daphnia [Artemis of Laurel]. The whole land is full of Artemisia [i.e., Artemisions, shrines of Artemis], Aphrodisia, and Nymphaia – amidst groves that are for the most part full of flowers due to the abundance of water. And there are many Hermaia on the roads and Poseidia on the headlands. And in the shrine of [Artemis] Alpheionia there are paintings by Cleanthes and Aregon – by the former a *Capture of Troy* and a *Birth of Athene*, by the latter an *Artemis Borne Aloft on a Griffin*. (Strabo C343)

I have quoted this passage, remarkably lyrical for the geographer Strabo (64 BC–ca. AD 25), at some length for the wonderful sense that it gives of the place of the gods in the imagination, lives, and environment of the Greeks, a place that cannot be conjured up by statements that Artemis is goddess of the hunt.

Less lyrical, however, is the cult of Artemis Laphria (perhaps, the "Devouring") at Patrae. There we find a stupendous procession culminating in the arrival of a maiden priestess riding in a float drawn by deer! The altar, of tinder-dry wood, has already been prepared. And the next day:

> They throw, living, onto the altar edible birds and likewise all the victims, and in addition wild boars and deer and gazelles. Some even bring the cubs of wolves and of bears, others full-grown beasts. And they place upon the altar the fruit of cultivated trees. Then they light the wood. At this point I have even seen, say, a bear or some other animal, either forced outwards by the first onrush of the fire, or even escaping through brute strength. Those who threw them on bring them back again to the fire. And they recount that no one has ever been injured by the animals. (Pausanias 7.18.12–13)

Out beyond this, Artemis may turn into a major goddess of the city, as in effect she is in Patrae and in Aetolian Calydon, the scene of Meleager's boar hunt and the origin of the cult of Artemis Laphria. Her domination of a city is, however, more frequent in Asia Minor, and this is what is represented by the cult at Ephesus (above). This, then, is an area phenomenon.

Conclusion: The Invisibility of the Gods

The Artemis that the Greeks sensed in a vibrantly fertile land, standing also in a dangerous relationship to girls and their transition into matronhood, dominating the wild, and even demanding a selective holocaust of all things living, especially wild things, is the "same" Artemis that Theseus and his son Hippolytus meet in the epilogue of Euripides' play *Hippolytus* (lines 1283–1443). Though dramas are very much concerned with the inscrutable and worrying actions of the Olympian gods, the gods themselves are largely banished from the tragic stage: generally they may only appear, as here, at beginning or end, in prologue or epilogue – outside the action of the play. These are moments set in that special register where what happens on the stage stands above or beyond the present plot. In a startling moment, the Chorus has been singing to Aphrodite who is not present, but it is Artemis that appears (1283) and, continuing the lyric momentum by chanting in anapaests, announces herself, then in prose upbraids Theseus for his mortal ignorance and consoles Hippolytus as he is carried in to die. Artemis is almost certainly up high – on the palace roof (the roof of the *skēnē*, the stage building), or even on the *mēchanē*, that stage crane on which the "god from the machine" (*deus ex machina*) typically appeared (cf. Barrett 1964:395–6). The point is that the Olympian god belongs in his or her own element, the ether, and remains separated from man even in a moment of epiphany like this. It was even worth inventing a stage machine to bring this about. By convention such final moments bring out an explanation of events which is only known to the gods themselves, or to their human equivalents – the tragedians or narrators that manage a plot with the omniscience of its creator.

However unsatisfactory Artemis' explanation in this particular play – and the "justice" of the gods always surpasses or disappoints human expectation in tragedians, above all Euripides – we must not miss its very special nature. Theseus is immediately overwhelmed by the divine presence and can only react with "alas!" (1313) and "mistress, I am destroyed!" (1325). But Hippolytus, in a particular sort of near-death experience, senses the divine fragrance (1392) and the presence of the goddess. In what seems a cold moment to modern audiences, perhaps wrongly, her exceptional purity as an Olympian divinity prevents her from witnessing his death (1437), the very same purity which is required in any ritual in order to communicate with these heavenly beings. Humans frequently turn to oracles for advice on such purity – religious dirt, *miasma*, must be avoided or undergo religious cleaning, *katharsis*.

Even in the epic, gods are rarely seen for what they are. Athene, who often helps Odysseus, has to reveal herself explicitly to him, only to receive this reaction:

> It is hard, goddess, for a mortal who meets you to recognize you,
> even if he is very knowledgeable: you take on every shape.
> (Homer, *Odyssey* 13.312–13)

And elsewhere in the *Odyssey* (17.485–7) we hear about gods walking the earth in disguise to check up on the administration of human law and order. What matters for us here is that gods have a culture of disguise and do not appear in their true form, whatever that true form might be – Semele discovered to her cost that the true form

of Zeus was the thunderbolt. Thus the divine is less observed than sensed, as for instance Hippolytus does by its fragrance. If Odysseus had been more alert he would have sensed that the arrival of Nausicaa to help him towards the court of Alcinous was the result of Athene's intervention, by disguising herself as a companion of Nausicaa's. He would also have realized that his prayer to Athene (6.324–7), at a shrine of hers that conveniently appears, was promptly answered by a strange mist protecting him and the appearance of a young maiden carrying a pitcher to give him directions. This is how the Olympians actually work.

So when tragedians and others speculate about the actions of particular gods, or of "the god" – which often means Zeus – they are not doing something mysteriously philosophical or different from the popular religion. The mythology, the "philosophy," and the religion all form part of the same picture. At a temple the Greek sacrificer does not pray facing the cult-statue; rather, he turns his back on the mythic, anthropomorphic, god at this moment. Formal public prayer to the major gods was typically conducted at an altar, looking upwards, hands raised to the sky. What did they imagine was there? Perhaps a sort of notional Mount Olympus, that earth of the gods, perhaps something of the Aeschylean god, some sense of the forces that dominated the world they lived in and that were somehow above it but watching.

But they watch with eyes that are not ours. So free are they from the worries and concerns of humanity that they may seem irresponsible or immoral. In a famous Homeric cliché, generations of men are like leaves (*Iliad* 6.146, 21.464; Simonides fr. 8.2 West; Aristophanes, *Birds* 685), whereas the gods are routinely described as "gods who exist always" (e.g., *Iliad* 1.290; *Odyssey* 5.7) and feast energetically on Olympus (*Iliad* 1.533–604). Achilles throws up before Priam an image of two pots on Zeus's threshold, from which he dispenses a mixture of good and evil to man, or evil alone, but never apparently unalloyed good (*Iliad* 24.527–33). Another image is of the laughter of the gods, as Hera's scolding of Zeus and Hephaestus' intervention collapse into insignificance (*Iliad* 1.599), or as Zeus enjoys the spectacle of the gods going to war with each other (*Iliad* 21.389–90). Then there are the scales: unaccountably these same all-powerful beings do have the self-imposed job of managing us. So Zeus holds up the scales to balance out whether a hero should die now (*Iliad* e.g. 22.209), or debates with himself whether the fighting should go on a bit longer (*Iliad* 16.652). If anything, this Zeus is more frightening than the vague power imagined by the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (367–84): there the Trojans "have the stroke of Zeus to talk about," and he hates overbearing, over-rich houses, a description that applies as much to the doomed Agamemnon as to dead Priam. Zeus came to power in a violent revolution, and somehow from that elderly Chorus folk can derive a proverbial lesson about learning through suffering (160–80).

The character of his rule is most intensely explored in epic and drama. Here we learn of the sheer distance between man and the gods, something which leads in the fourth century BC to Plato's view (*Symposium* 203a) that "god with man does not mix," and to Aristotle's view (*Magna Moralia* 1208b30–1) that it would be "bizarre to say that you loved Zeus." The problem therefore posed by Greek religion was how you bridged this gap between man and the Olympian gods. Intermediary beings – demons – became one answer, special rites or mystery religions another; and philosophy became the doctrine of self-help: man must ascend by his own efforts.

The Olympian gods are in the last resort a model for approaching the divine. It helps in thinking about divine planning to suppose that there is a Zeus acting as he does for what we would recognize as motives, and influenced by likes, dislikes, and prayer – otherwise, why would we bother? This leads to wonderful manifestations of Greek culture – the mythology and its incarnation in the objects of worship and the décor of cult, and in Greek art and architecture at large. It also helps ordinary traditional people to channel their genuine piety and find social fulfillment, and at times release, through vehicles such as prayer, sacrifice, oracles, and even a sort of pilgrimage to oracles and other notable sites. But the anthropomorphism of the Olympian gods comes with a health warning that the gods are not like us, are distant from us, and live elsewhere. We may pray to the skies and talk about Olympus. We may pray to Zeus, or to our local city god, or to the god whose function it is to protect us in our present role or circumstances. Each of the gods combines a sense of power and personality. It is the personality that gives us a handle on them, allows us to pray to them at all. But it is in the end a cloak for their power.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

The most authoritative book on Greek religion, including the gods, is Burkert 1985; briefer but remarkably powerful is Bremmer 1994. Susan Deacy is general editor of a new series, Greek Gods and Heroes, which covers not only the ancient information about the god but also their tradition into modern times: already available is Dowden 2005 on Zeus, and to appear are F. Graf on Apollo, S. Deacy on Athena, R. Seaford on Dionysus, and E. Stafford on Heracles. The facts of mythology are available in Apollodorus' *Library of Greek Mythology*, translated by Hard (Hard 1997), and in a wide variety of dictionaries of mythology, e.g. March 1998, Grimal 1987 (important to use the full, Blackwell, edition) and Graves 1962 (provided you do not believe his poetic fantasies about trees and triple goddesses). For the ways in which mythology works, see Dowden 1992 and Graf 1993b. On the evidence for the origins of the pantheon of twelve, see Long 1987. For the synthesis of myth and religion, the most visionary account is that of Otto 1954, and more specifically 1965. For detailed information on the cults of particular gods, it is still worth going back to Farnell 1896–1909.

CHAPTER THREE

A Land Full of Gods: Nature Deities in Greek Religion

Jennifer Larson

In most introductions to Greek religion, the nature deities are briefly noted as minor gods in the pantheon, overshadowed by the towering personalities and presences of the Olympian gods. Yet a quantitative analysis, were such a thing possible, would show that the vast numbers of river gods, nymphs, and other local deities accorded divine status by the Greeks made them a constant presence in daily life. Greek authors focus primarily on the city and its festivals, yet most Greeks were peasants who lived in the countryside and supported the towns through farming and herding. The experience of this majority certainly included a much closer acquaintance with the gods of the landscape than our literary sources suggest.

The category of "nature deities" is a modern construct. All of the Greek gods were connected in one way or another with natural phenomena, so in some sense all are nature deities. Zeus was a god of rain, Poseidon of earthquakes, Artemis of wild beasts. Even deities like Athena whose panhellenic personae were focused on the cultural rather than the natural sphere could be called upon in a variety of contexts to influence natural processes, such as stopping a plague or helping to ensure good crops. A number of lesser deities, however, were nature gods in the sense that they personified specific features in the landscape or phenomena in the environment. They will be the subject of this chapter.

In terms of the audience of prospective worshipers, these deities fall into two groups. First are the innumerable gods of the rivers and springs, mountains and lakes. While myths of the river gods and nymphs occasionally became known to a panhellenic audience, their cults were geographically limited to a particular town or region. In this respect, they were like the heroes and heroines, and made a similar contribution to the self-definition of the communities who worshiped them. The second group is comprised of divine entities perceived and recognized by all: the deities representing the earth, sun, moon, sea, and winds. Among the classical Greeks, these aspects of the environment were everywhere recognized as divine, but their

myths and cults remained undeveloped relative to those of the more complex Olympians and the more numerous local gods.

The nineteenth-century concept of the "vegetation god" does not correspond to any individual member of the Greek pantheon; instead, many Greek gods, including the nymphs, included growing things among their spheres of influence. Similarly, many gods regulated the animal world. Among these, Pan will be treated because he alone is a Master of Animals who himself partakes of animal form and nature as a regular part of his panhellenic persona.

Landscape and Religion

Of course, "the Greeks" express differing views of the natural world in different times, places, and genres. One recurrent theme is a Hobbesian struggle between hostile natural forces and fearful humans. The natural world is inhuman and therefore without pity or compassion. We see this idea in the similes of the *Iliad*, which tend to focus on the fearsome aspects of nature, such as the terrible powers of stormy sea, fire, and flood, or the depredations of wild animals. Achilles' battle with the river Xanthus is said to mythologize "the essential antagonism between man and nature" (Hurwit 1991:35). Yet this literary theme should be balanced by a look at Greek religion in practice, which takes the more hopeful view that the powers in the land, especially in one's native land, are potentially dangerous yet willing to be appeased. Often they are celebrated as ancestors who guide the development of the community's most important asset, the young. In Greek literature, the mention of a river evokes the affective ties between a hero and his homeland, and the gods of the land naturally favor and protect the native-born. For his part, Xanthus is eager to defend the Trojans against the pitiless invader, and offended at the slaughter of youths (*Iliad* 21.1–161). Achilles' battle against Xanthus can be compared to his relationship with the river of his homeland, Spercheus. Peleus vows that if Achilles returns home, he will sacrifice a hundred oxen and fifty rams, while Achilles will cut his hair, grown long for the purpose, and dedicate it to the river (*Iliad* 23.140–51). Spercheus is a powerful symbol of the homecoming Achilles will never enjoy.

Another important issue in the relationship between nature and Greek religion has to do with the environment of worship, the context in which people encountered their gods. While every city had its intramural sanctuaries, the Greeks never stopped visiting and building places of worship in the countryside, often in remote and inaccessible locations. The panhellenic construct of Olympus as the home of the gods existed in tension with cult practice, which located the gods in their sanctuaries and viewed the altar and the cult statue as the places where the gods were most predictably manifest and present. Yet the gods are present in the landscape even before an altar is built; the construction of an altar or sanctuary is conceived as a response to the pre-existent holiness of a place (Cole 2004:37–8). How did the Greeks determine which places were holy? Often, the holy places were the most beautiful. John Ruskin, among many others, contended that the Greeks lacked a strong aesthetic response to the natural world. While it is true that we find no Constables or Wordsworths in ancient Greece, the responses and emotions that

fueled the art and poetry of the Romantics found different outlets in antiquity. In traditional polytheistic cultures, aesthetic appreciation of nature is inseparable from awareness of the sacred in the landscape; special beauty means that the spot is the abode of a god or gods (Motte 1973:27–8). Mountain peaks, groves, springs, caves, and other landscape features were often regarded as inherently sacred, and their symbolic fascination was closely bound up with their aesthetic appeal. Territorial and economic reasons for the placement of sanctuaries certainly existed, and strategic placement helps to account for the spectacular success of individual sanctuaries. Yet any comprehensive model of sanctuary development must take account of an irreducible, elusive, and subjective element: the apprehension of the sacred. Many sanctuaries, such as those on mountain peaks and in caves, were relatively inaccessible. Delphi is a good example of a stunningly beautiful yet rather impractical location. Its sacred aura was enhanced by mysterious intoxicating vapors, long considered fictional but now shown to be consistent with the geology of the place (de Boer et al. 2001).

Even where beauty in the landscape was not a top criterion, as in crowded urban areas, water for purifications, preferably from a running source, was always required in sanctuaries (Cole 1988). This meant that vegetation was likely to be abundant. In fact, the sanctuaries of both male and female deities were thought to be incomplete without a sacred grove or some other vegetation. Even heroes had their gardens. The grove of the Academy, shrine of a venerable Attic hero, became famous for its resident philosophers, and the Healing Hero, or Heros Iatros, had his garden in Athens. Apollo had a garden at Sunium, and Heracles had a garden on Thasos. Usually we only hear of these gardens when their leases are mentioned in inscriptions, but they were not exceptional. Of all the Greek deities, however, the nymphs were perhaps most closely associated with gardens.

Gardens of the Nymphs

We might expect that nymphs, being denizens of the wild spaces, occupy a place in the Greek mental map corresponding to the wild, the untamed, and the uncivilized: "nature" perceived as "other." To some extent this is the case. Homer's epithet for the nymphs who dance with Artemis (*Odyssey* 6.105–8) is *agronomoi*, "dwelling in the wild places," and Euripides speaks of nymphs inhabiting the snowy peaks of mountains (*Helen* 1323–6). Sophocles draws a sensitive portrait of the storm-beaten, desolate landscape of Lemnos where Philoctetes is stranded, with the nymphs and the wind as his only companions (*Philoctetes* 1453–62). Yet against this concept of the nymphs we can compare another model that contradicts it in some ways, but is just as venerable and well attested in the sources. This is the idea that the nymphs inhabit a pleasant garden. To the Greeks, a "garden of the nymphs" was a space intermediate between the untamed wild and the carefully tended field of grain or pruned orchard. The garden might exhibit signs of planned improvement, such as a built fountain, but it was ideally a natural spot that already serendipitously possessed everything needed to appeal to human tastes and comforts, like the sanctuary of the nymphs and Achelous on the Ilissus river visited by Socrates and his friends in the *Phaedrus* (229a–230c), which has shady trees, a cool spring, a grassy slope for reclining,

fragrant blooms and the music of the cicada. Here, as in Ovid's description of Diana's grotto (*Metamorphoses* 3.158–9), nature simulates art. Such places were likely to be recognized as dwelling places of gods and supplied with altars and offerings. Below I describe actual sanctuaries that served as gardens of the nymphs, but first let us look at another idealized, literary nymph's garden.

In the *Odyssey*, the nymph Calypso inhabits a cave surrounded by a lush garden, presented as a conjunction of natural elements which spontaneously arrange themselves to provide a maximum of aesthetic pleasure, while the utilitarian garden of Alcinous serves as a foil to that of the nymph (*Odyssey* 5.63–74, 7.114–32). Each garden is made up of four main elements: trees, vines, herbaceous plants, and a water source. The pristine state of Calypso's trees is emphasized by the birds nesting in them and the fact that they are not fruiting trees, whereas Alcinous' trees are all productive domesticated types. Calypso's vine is loaded with untouched clusters, whereas Alcinous' vines are busily harvested and processed by his men. Alcinous' garden beds presumably contain kitchen herbs or vegetables, while Calypso's herbaceous plants are wild violets and parsley. Finally, Alcinous' fountains are constructed to provide water to the palace and the townspeople, whereas those of Calypso, equally abundant, are allowed to flow freely this way and that. Both gardens give pleasure, one to mortals and one to the gods. After his long journey to Calypso's distant island, Hermes finds himself charmed and refreshed by her garden. Far from requiring the attention lavished on the gardens of Alcinous, the nymph's garden has domesticated itself. Note that the criterion of pleasure automatically gives the garden a human point of reference: it is judged by anthropomorphically divine, hence human, pleasure. The scents, colors, and textures that please mortals also please the gods. Grimal (1984:69) contrasts the awe and fearful veneration paid to sacred groves in the Italic tradition with this Greek idea that divine gardens give pleasure: the former emphasizes supernatural distance and otherness, while the latter focuses on qualities that mortals share with the gods. The divine garden does not represent wild nature tamed by human agency; it expresses the ideal of a natural world that remains untamed, yet conforms itself to anthropocentric standards of safety, comfort, and pleasure: a golden-age world. This concept of the "divine garden" is related to that of the sanctuary, and to the selection of sanctuary sites for many deities, not just the nymphs.

There are close cultic analogs of the literary garden of the nymphs. But as all gardeners know, aesthetically pleasing arrangements do not spring up by themselves; they require a great deal of human intervention. In late fifth-century Attica and Thessaly, two men devoted to the worship of the nymphs created gardens around the mouths of caves, consciously following the cultural model of the nymphs' sanctuary set forth in the *Odyssey*. During the archaic and classical periods, the nymphs were credited with the ability to "seize" individuals and inspire them. These nympholepts sometimes withdrew to cave shrines and spent their lives communing with the nymphs and other resident gods. They welcomed visitors and may have acted as prophets. One such nympholept was Archedamus, an immigrant from Thera, who devoted his life to the maintenance of a sanctuary of the nymphs at Vari in Attica (Figure 3.1). At the instruction of the nymphs, he cut stairs, sculptures, and inscriptions into the rock of a cave, and outside it cultivated a garden. At a cave near Pharsalus, Pantalces left a long inscription inviting worshipers to enjoy themselves and take pleasure in the sanctuary. He refers twice to the growing things that he

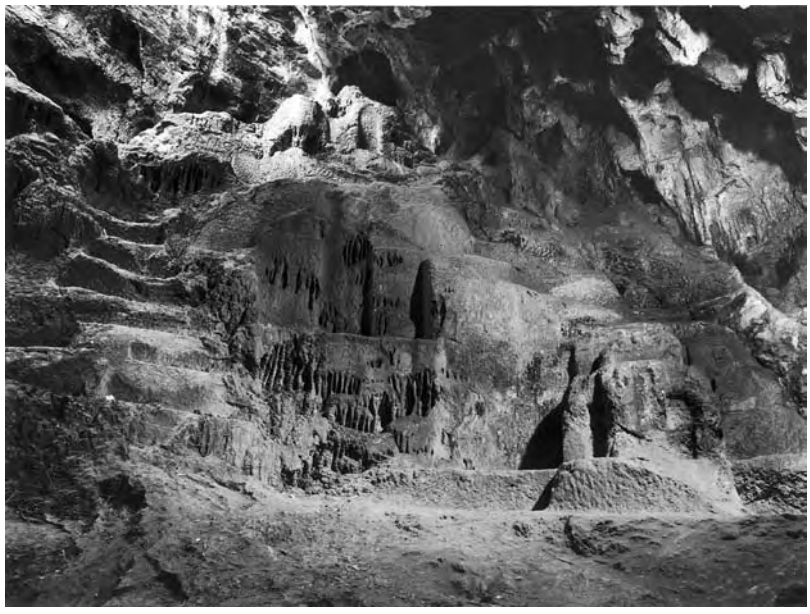

Figure 3.1 The cave of Archedamus at Vari, Attica. Photo by Elmar Gehnen. Courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens

planted, and tells how the nymphs made him an overseer of the place. He lists the resident gods: the nymphs, Pan, and Hermes are mentioned first, then a number of gods concerned with the health and nurture of youths: Apollo, Heracles, Chiron, Asclepius, and Hygieia. Archedamus' and Pantalces' shared conception of the proper way to honor the nymphs includes the idea that their dwelling is not a temple but a cave, a natural shelter with certain analogies to human structures, but distinct from them. It is permissible, even necessary, for the human worshiper to improve on the natural contours of the cave. Outside the cave, there must be vegetation. Since the appropriate, aesthetically desirable plants will not domesticate themselves, as they did for Calypso, the worshipers of the nymphs plant and tend the garden. In one sense, the nympholept strives to approximate the literary ideal of the nymph's garden. Yet Archedamus and Pantalces diverged significantly from the ideal in their insistence on announcing their own agency in the creation and maintenance of the gardens. Far from representing the gardens as self-domesticating, they filled them with inscriptions describing their own labors and how these were undertaken at the bidding of the nymphs. Greek votive religion, which assumes that the gods require or at least expect material expressions of worship in the form of dedications and sanctuaries, clashes with the theological and poetic ideal of divine autonomy and bliss.

Worshiping the Nymphs

Archedemus and Pantalces were not representative of the average Greek, but individuals whose extraordinary piety led them to devote their lives to maintaining intense relationships with specific gods. Yet most classical Greeks would have been

familiar with the worship of nymphs at cave shrines, often in company with Pan or other deities concerned with rural life. Although most of these sanctuaries are not archaeologically visible until the late archaic and classical periods, the concept is already well developed in the *Odyssey*, which describes one such sacred cave in Ithaca:

> At the head of the harbor is a long-leafed olive tree, and near it is a pleasant, shadowy cave sacred to the nymphs called naiads. In it are stone mixing bowls and jars and there too the bees store honey. And in the cave are long looms of stone, where the nymphs weave sea-purple cloth, a wonder to see, and there are ever-flowing springs. There are two doors: that toward the north wind is the way down for humans, but that toward the south wind is holy indeed. Men do not enter by that way, but it is the path of the immortals. (*Odyssey* 13.102–12)

Created by nature yet analogous in many ways to human dwellings, caves of the nymphs often contain formations suggestive of furniture: beds, looms, and household vessels or bathing pools. The numerous cave shrines of Attica have been most thoroughly investigated, but others are known in Thessaly, Crete, the Ionian islands, Magna Graecia, and elsewhere. The few examples securely dated to the archaic period include Saftulis cave near Sicyon, where unique examples of archaic painting on wood were discovered in 1934. Visitors in the sixth century hung *pinakes* or painted tablets in the cave to commemorate their gifts to the nymphs. One well-preserved *pinax* shows a family preparing to sacrifice a sheep at a low altar; another has a triad of women, probably the nymphs. The terracottas of pregnant women found at this cave, while not standard offerings to the nymphs, are consistent with the general Greek belief that nymphs aided in childbirth (Euripides, *Electra* 626), the nurture of the young, and girls' transition to adulthood at the time of their wedding. Many girls brought dolls and other toys to the nymphs when they entered adulthood, and the nymphs were among the goddesses who might receive formal prenuptial offerings. The word *nymphē* means "bride," and the nymphs were always pictured as beautiful women, the divine models for mortal brides.

The offerings at Saftulis cave began in the seventh century and included valuable metal objects such as bronze vases and jewelry. Such lavish gifts, contrasting with the simple, perishable offerings typical of rustic shrines, suggest that the cave attracted visitors from the city of Sicyon or even Corinth. Yet Saftulis cave is not mentioned by Greek writers and was probably a strictly local cult. In contrast, the Corycian cave of the nymphs and Pan at Delphi was famous because of its location in a panhellenic sanctuary and contained an unusual volume of cult-related deposits. Pilgrims to Delphi brought hundreds of seashells from the Corinthian gulf as gifts for the nymphs. The cave was also a center of divination, with *astragaloi* or "knucklebones" from sheep and goats, which were cast like dice. This form of fortune-telling was associated with Hermes, whose relationship with the Corycian nymphs is mentioned in the *Homeric Hymn* (4) *to Hermes* (552–65).

In addition to the cave shrine, the nymphs were worshiped in other contexts, for which Homer also supplies models. At the spring sanctuary outside the town of Ithaca, a fountain and altar are encircled by a grove of poplars, and everyone who passes greets the nymphs (*Odyssey* 17.205–11). All evidence suggests that the nymphs were first and foremost spring deities, but they came to personify many aspects of the landscape,

including hills, lakes, and trees. The common term "naiad" is related to the verb *naō*, to flow, and many nymph names including Callirhoë (lovely flowing), Arethusa (she who waters) and Empedo (continual) refer to the nymphs' association with water. Civic waterworks often incorporated sacred springs, like those of the Sithnid nymphs at Megara, or the Clepsydra associated with the nymph Empedo at Athens, both attested for the archaic period. Particularly in Thessaly and Magna Graecia, cities celebrated spring nymphs as emblems of the community and portrayed them on coins. The Sicilian city of Syracuse held an annual state festival of the spring Cyane ("dark blue"), during which bulls were sacrificed and plunged into the waters. Similar sacrifices of immersion are attested for river gods, and are probably Indo-European in origin.

The spring might be described as the microhabitat of the nymph; if this is the case, the macrohabitat is the "mountain," *oros*, which need be little more than a hill in terms of altitude. Yet *oros* carries a consistent range of associations in Greek thought. In myth and cult, it is the meeting place of gods and mortals (Hesiod and the Muses or Anchises and Aphrodite) and a place where societal norms undergo temporary reversal, as in Dionysiac revels (Buxton 1994:81–96). It is the setting for many activities of economic importance, particularly the extraction of raw materials, which must be carried out deep in the countryside and far from settlements. To take Attica as an example, Mount Parnes was a source of timber and charcoal; Pentelicon supplied marble, and Hymettus was a center of apiculture. Hunting also took place in mountainous, forested areas. All of these activities fell under the purview of nymphs, the resident deities in the landscape, whom Homer (*Iliad* 6.420) calls *orestiades nymphai*. One of several Attic caves of the nymphs, endowed with two magnificent marble votive reliefs, was discovered near a quarry on Pentelicon, and another relief dedicated to the nymphs was carved into the wall of a quarry on Paros.

Of all the mountain-centered activities patronized by the nymphs, the most important was the herding of sheep and goats. The archaic poet Semonides (fr. 20 West) told how shepherds sacrifice to the nymphs "and to the offspring of Maia [Hermes], for these have kinship with the herdsmen." Here we should think of modest domestic and private offerings in contrast to institutionalized, city-sponsored sacrifices. In the *Odyssey* (14.434–6) the swineherd Eumaeus sets aside a portion of his meal for Hermes and the nymphs; such small gifts of food, flowers, or fruit are well attested in the sources but archaeologically invisible. Hermes, Apollo, and Pan all have important pastoral functions and often appear as partners of the nymphs in worship contexts. In the folklore of herdsmen, nymphs possessed the power to multiply the flocks of anyone they favored, particularly the mortals they took as lovers. Yet many a prosperous man who angered his patroness or boasted of their relations found himself quickly ruined. Woodcutters told similar stories about the nymphs later known as dryads or hamadryads, whose life was bound up with the trees they inhabited:

> But when they are born, pines or high-topped oaks spring up with them upon the fruitful earth, beautiful lush trees standing high on the lofty mountains. They call them the sanctuaries of the immortals, and mortals never cut them with the axe. (*Homeric Hymn* (5) *to Aphrodite* 265–8)

Nymphs were worshiped as individuals or as pluralities, usually shown in Greek art as triads. Three recurrent themes appear in the lore of the nymphs throughout the Greek world: first, the nymphs are present in the landscape; they are connected with water supplies and the rural pursuits of the herdsman and beekeeper. They are also associated with procurement of raw materials from the land: timber, stone, and ores. Second, nymphs have to do with rites of passage and the social dimension of the *nymphē* as bride, in addition to the general nurture of the young. Third, as the daughters and consorts of the local rivers, or the mothers and wives of primordial heroes, nymphs are ubiquitous in narratives of founding and colonization, the stories through which Greek communities established their claims and affective ties to the land.

Goat-Footed, Noise-Loving Pan

Pan is distinctive among the Greek gods because of his hybrid human–animal form (theriomorphism). Originally a guardian of the goats whose character he shares, he achieved panhellenic status only in the fifth century, when his cult was introduced from Arcadia to Athens and rapidly diffused to the rest of the Greek world. Many etymologies have been put forward for his name, which is also known in the compound form Aigipan (Goat-Pan). The most convincing makes it a cognate of Latin *pastor*, so that Pan is "one who grazes the flocks." In Arcadia itself, Pan's myth and cult were not standardized (see also Chapter 17). There were conflicting views of his genealogy, the most common being that he was the son of Zeus and twin of the national hero Arcas, or that he was the son of Hermes and Penelope (Herodotus 2.145; Borgeaud 1988: 42). His connection with Zeus sprang from their association on Mount Lycaeum, a focus of ethnic identity for the Arcadians. Pan possessed a sanctuary on the south slopes of Lycaeum, where in keeping with his identity as both goat and goatherd, he offered asylum to any animal being pursued by a wolf (*lykos*). A votive dump excavated here revealed many late archaic and early classical bronze figures, cut-out plaques, and terracottas with hunters, men carrying animals for sacrifice, and Hermes. As at the Cretan sanctuary of Hermes at Kato Syme, where male rites of passage were celebrated in a pederastic context, both youthful and mature males are depicted in the objects from Lycaeum. The bronzes include dead foxes, a standard courtship gift presented by adult males to their favorite youths. Inscribed pots show that the sanctuary was sacred to Pan, whose role as a god of the hunt and Master of Animals made him well suited, like Hermes, to sponsor maturation rituals (Hübinger 1992).

The Athenians believed that Pan sent them a message on the eve of Marathon (490 BC) via Philippides, who ran 145 miles to ask for aid from the Spartans. Passing through Arcadia, he saw an apparition of the god, who asked why the Athenians did not honor him in spite of the good deeds that he had done and would yet do for them. When they learned of Pan's epiphany, the Athenians concluded that he had contributed to the victory at Marathon and instituted his worship with an annual festival including a torch race. Pan's official sanctuary was a grotto on the northwest slope of the Acropolis, but he quickly became a resident of the Attic countryside,

where he was worshiped together with the nymphs and other rustic gods in numerous cave shrines. Contrary to the practice in Arcadia, where Pan was a tutelary god with temples and sanctuaries like those of other deities, the rest of the Greek world viewed the cave as the proper dwelling for this god of the wild places. After 490 BC, the cults at these caves, including one near Marathon, gained a wider and more affluent clientele who dedicated pots, small metal items, and marble votive reliefs. Menander's comedy *Dyscolus* is set at one such shrine, the cave at Phyle in Attica. In the play, Pan rewards a pious maiden by causing a wealthy youth to fall in love with her, and punishes her neglectful father Cnemon, whose sour misanthropy offends against the god's rule of laughter and good cheer.

Folk traditions connected Pan with mysterious noises, particularly the echoes heard in mountainous terrain, with "panic," the phenomenon of sudden terror, seemingly without cause, that comes over armies in the night; and with certain types of illness involving apparent possession by the god (seizures). Pan's theriomorphism and association with madness also brought him into connection with ecstatic forms of worship such as the cults of Dionysus and the Great Mother, though always as a subordinate figure. Pan's cult took root in Boeotia as a pendant to that of the Mother, as we learn from the Theban poet Pindar (fr. 96 Snell), who calls Pan "the dog of Meter." One of the manifestations of the Theban Cabiri was the father-and-son pair Hermes and Pan, who acted as attendants on a mother goddess. Similarly at Lycosura in Arcadia, the sanctuary of Pan was located beside that of Demeter and Despoena. It boasted an eternal flame and verse oracles delivered by Arcas' wife, the nymph Erato, which visitors were permitted to read (Pausanias 8.37.11).

Nourishers of the Young: The Rivers

The religious experience of most moderns diverges significantly from that of people in antiquity because it is not intimately tied to one place. For the Greeks, place of birth determined one's relationships with the gods. Colonists leaving their old homes brought with them fire from the hearth of their mother-city, and the cults of its gods. Yet their children would be nurtured in the new land by its resident powers. Like the nymphs, the river gods were closely associated with human fertility, the care of children, and love of one's homeland. These minor gods made up for their strictly local influence by their great numbers: "it is difficult for a mortal to tell the names of all, but those who dwell near them know their own" (Hesiod, *Theogony* 69–70). Babies were often given names evocative of local rivers: Asopodorus, Ismenodorus, Acheloeus. In fifth-century Athens, a man named Cephisodotus co-founded a shrine to the river Cephisus and other gods, including Hermes and the nymphs. The other founder, Xenocratia, made offerings for the welfare of her son. She established an altar for a number of gods concerned with children, including the rivers Cephisus and Achelous; the trio Apollo, Artemis, and Leto; Eileithyia; and the local nymphs. Again, we are reminded of Peleus' prayers to the river Spercheus for his son's safety. The offering of a lock of hair to the local river was a widespread custom; in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* (6), Orestes calls this offering to Inachus a *threptērion*, a recompense for his upbringing.

Popular taboos and cult regulations protected the purity of rivers and springs against the taint of human dirt, excrement, and other wastes, and rituals such as hand-washing or, in the case of an army, sacrifice before crossing a river are attested (Cole 2004: 30–37). Herodotus (6.76) tells how Cleomenes sacrificed to the river Erasinus at the border of Argolis on his way to attack Argos. When the omens were unfavorable, he said that he honored the river for not betraying his countrymen, but that even so, the Argives would not escape danger. In the *Iliad*, the cults of river deities are well developed: Scamander has his own priest and Spercheus has an altar and sanctuary (*Iliad* 5.77, 23.140–51). Animal sacrifice was performed either on an altar in a sanctuary or at the river bank itself so that the blood flowed into the water. Immersion sacrifices are also attested; Homer speaks of live horses cast into the Scamander (*Iliad* 21.131–2). Excavated counterparts to the literary descriptions are few, but a Swedish team investigated the sanctuary of the river Pamisus, the major waterway of Messenia, in the early twentieth century (Valmin 1938: 417–65). Located at a group of warm- and cold-water springs feeding the stream, it was founded in the archaic period and had a reputation as a place for healing. It included a small Doric temple with an unusual feature, a votive pit incorporated in the temple wall that connected with one of the springs feeding the river. Into this pit were deposited gifts of all sorts, including a number of small bronzes, which can be divided into animal figures (primarily horses, bulls, and goats) and human figures (mainly naked youths of classical date). There are signs that the god's sanctuary was used in rites of maturation; a number of small lead stars were found, originally attached with wire in wreaths. These are paralleled at Laconian sanctuaries and were apparently dedicated by ephebes. Other metal items include *astragaloi*, probably dedicated as children's toys, and models of male genitals deposited in hope of curing ailments or siring offspring. One curious bronze figurine is the bottom half of a boy that was originally cast in two parts and connected by a peg with its top. Since the feet of this figurine appeared deformed, the excavator guessed that the top half was worn by its dedicator as an amulet, while the bottom half was presented to the river-god in hopes of a cure. A ramp led from the temple to an altar, and according to tradition, the kings of Messenia brought annual sacrifices to the river (Pausanias 4.3.10). If accurate, this would place the origins of the cult in the seventh or eighth century.

The only river-god to achieve panhellenic status in cult is Achelous, the longest river in Greece, who shared many sanctuaries with the nymphs by the fifth century (Figure 3.2). No temple of the Achelous, which formed the boundary between Acarnania and Aetolia in northwestern Greece, has so far been uncovered, but he was regularly worshiped from archaic times as a generalized deity of fresh water. The cult was promoted by Zeus' oracle at Dodona, which often recommended sacrifice to Achelous (Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F20). Theagenes of Megara dedicated an altar to Achelous when he diverted a stream to his new fountain house, where the Sithnid nymphs were the deities of the local springs (Pausanias 1.41.2). A boundary stone marking a shrine of the nymphs and Achelous was unearthed in Oechalia in Euboea, accompanied by a bronze of the god (ca. 460 BC), shown as a bearded, draped figure holding a cornucopia (Isler 1970:no. 264). The horn of plenty refers both to the river as a source of prosperity and to the myth, depicted in black figured vases, of his combat with Heracles for the hand of Deianira, during which the hero wrenched off one of the god's horns. In the opening of Sophocles'

Figure 3.2 Votive relief from Eleusis, showing head of Achelous, Pan, and three nymphs. Photo courtesy of National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Trachiniae, Deianira describes her polymorphous suitor, "who in three shapes was always asking me from my father – coming now as a bull in visible form, now as a serpent, sheeny and coiled, now ox-faced with human trunk, while from his thick-shaded beard wellheads of fountain-water sprayed" (lines 9–14, trans. Jebb). The Oechalian bronze is notable for its full anthropomorphism, which seems to be characteristic of fifth-century sculpture. River gods are likewise shown in human form on pediments of the temple of Zeus at Olympia and the Parthenon in Athens, but in other media they are shown as theriomorphic, man–bull hybrids, the bull symbolizing both the terrifying force of a flooding river and the fertilizing potency of its waters. Achelous was also worshiped in the form of a mask (a marble example dating to about 470 BC was found near Marathon) and his bearded, horned face was used as an amulet in jewelry.

In myth, the rivers figured as ancestors and primordial figures, the first kings in the land. Examples include Peneus in Thessaly, Inachus in Argos, Asopus in Phlius, and Scamander in the Troad. This way of thinking about rivers was exported to Greek colonies, where there was a pressing need to establish claims upon the soil and the all-important water sources, the first priority in choosing the site of a new settlement. All over the Greek world, but notably in well-watered Sicily, river gods were celebrated as emblems on fifth- and fourth-century coins.

Wide-Bosomed Earth and All-Seeing Sun

Hesiod's *Theogony* (117) describes Earth as "the ever-sure foundation of all," a divine progenitor who also plays an instrumental role in bringing about the lasting rule of Zeus. At first portrayed as the enemy of the status quo, she eventually comes to support the hegemony of the Olympians. In the mythic imagination, Earth's primordial status and uncontrolled powers were necessarily superseded by a male-dominated regime representing order and stability. The same idea is expressed in the myth of Ge's prominence at Delphi as the "previous owner" of the oracle (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1–4) inherited by Apollo. Scholars disagree on whether there is any historical basis for Ge's oracle, and the credulous acceptance of the myth as historical fact has been strongly criticized (Sourvinou-Inwood 1991). While she had a temple at Delphi, archaeological evidence is lacking for Ge's cult there before the fifth century. Yet oracles of Earth are not unknown. At Olympia, there was a similar tradition that Gaea once possessed an oracle at the spot called Gaeus (Pausanias 5.14.10). Her offerings there were made on an ash altar like that of Zeus which was doubtless very old. Pausanias (7.25.8) visited another sanctuary called Gaeus in Aegae, where he saw what he considered a very ancient wooden image of Ge, and noted that the priestess was sworn to chastity. Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 28.147) adds that she drank bull's blood as an aid to prophecy, a practice also attested at Apollo's Argive oracle.

While the Earth is often named Gaea in poetry, in cult she is usually given the more prosaic name of Ge. Her cults were widespread yet never prominent at the civic level. She is frequently worshiped with Zeus, a combination that reflects the age-old partnership of sky-god and earth-goddess. Ge and Zeus Agoraeus were paired in the agora of Sparta, and a special area was devoted to Ge within the sanctuary of Zeus Olympius at Athens (Pausanias 3.11.9, 1.18.7). Here a small chasm was identified as the place where water drained away after Deucalion's flood, and honey cakes were tossed into the chasm annually, perhaps during the Anthesteria. At Athens Ge was sometimes identified with Curotrophus (nourisher of youths), a goddess who customarily received preliminary offerings before sacrifice, yet the sacrificial calendars of the deme Erchia and the Marathonian Tetrapolis, inscribed in the fourth century, list Curotrophus and Ge separately. These village calendars provide us a glimpse of the rural contexts in which Ge was typically worshiped. The Erchian calendar specifies that on a certain day the nymphs, Achelous, Alochus (a birth goddess), and Hermes will each receive a sheep, while Ge will receive a pregnant sheep. In the Tetrapolis calendar, Ge is given a pregnant cow "in the fields" and a black ram "at the oracle [*manteion*]." The offering of a pregnant animal has obvious symbolism, while a black animal is standard for deities who are associated with the underworld.

Ge was depicted anthropomorphically, but never fit comfortably into the cadre of Olympians or exhibited as distinct a personality as they did. Her dual ontological status as "Earth" and "Earth goddess" hindered such development. Reflecting this uncertainty, vase painters show her as a woman whose head and torso are rising from the ground. In her cosmic aspect as one of the three great domains (heaven, earth, and underworld), she appears in oaths. In the *Iliad* (3.103, 276–80) she is invoked with Zeus, Helius, the rivers, and the underworld deities to witness the oath attending the single combat of Paris and Menelaus. Two lambs, a white male and a black

female, are sacrificed for the Sun and Earth. The group of Zeus, Ge, and Helius as witnesses to oaths and other official business is widely attested in Greek inscriptions.

Although Helius was invoked in oaths, occasionally cited as an ancestor (particularly in myths connected with Corinth) and recognized everywhere as divine, worship of the Sun was limited among the classical Greeks (cf. Chapter 13), who tended to attribute purely astral cults to the barbarians (Aristophanes, *Peace* 410). Helius began to be syncretized with Apollo as early as the fifth century in Orphic speculation, but the widespread identification of Apollo as sun-god was a later phenomenon. Just as Ge at Delphi was considered a primordial deity who yielded to Apollo, Helius was the original possessor of the Acrocorinthus, the citadel of Corinth, but gave the land to Aphrodite (Pausanias 2.4.7). The scattering of minor cults in the Peloponnese (Sicyon, Argos, Hermione, Epidaurus, Mount Taleton in Laconia) and the holy flocks of Helius at Taenarum mentioned in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (410–13) suggest that this worship was deeply rooted in Dorian Greece. Thus it may be that Helius' cult was carried to Rhodes by Dorian settlers in the seventh century, though other theories hold that the sun worship there was prehellenic in origin. Pindar's seventh Olympian ode (71–5) conveys the unique relationship between the Rhodians and their patron god, who chose the island for himself and fathered the seven Heliadae to whom the Rhodian elite traced their ancestry. With the founding of Rhodes city in 408 BC, the annual festival of the Heliaea drew athletes and musicians from around the Greek world, and the cult gained even more fame when the 110-foot statue of Helius known as the Colossus of Rhodes was erected in 282 BC.

Gods of the Sea and Wind

Epic makes of Poseidon a great lord of the sea, emerging from his palace under the waves near Aegae to aid the Achaeans in battle, or rousing a storm to drown Odysseus on his raft. But Poseidon himself is a complex Mycenaean deity whose origins lie further inland; he is the Earth-Shaker, an ancestral god with ties to freshwater springs and horses. Even in the *Iliad* (13.10–30), the dominant image is that of Poseidon as a charioteer, driving his golden-maned horses over the sea. He himself is not a personification of the sea, but its ruler. If Poseidon is a lord of elemental forces, his Nereid consort Amphitrite is more closely identified in the *Odyssey* with the element itself: she breeds many monsters (*Odyssey* 5.417–22, 12.90) and the waves are hers (*Odyssey* 3.85, 12.55). Amphitrite is more than a literary invention; she often appears in cultic contexts with Poseidon, as at Isthmia (Pausanias 2.1.7). An archaic votive dump at Penteskouphia near Corinth yielded clay *pinakes* depicting Amphitrite with smaller-sized worshipers, or riding in a chariot with Poseidon.

In Greek mythology, the gods who represent the sea share its unbounded nature as the source of creatures formless and strange to human eyes. Monsters and shape-shifters, the latter often possessed of prophetic powers, come from the sea. Nereus and his congeners Proteus and Glaucus are Masters of Animals who control the supply of fish and other marine animals. In Greek fishermen's folklore, these Old Men of the Sea were elusive shape-changers who could tell one's fortune if captured. In Greek religious practice, on the other hand, the overriding concern with regard to the sea was safe travel. Many gods could be called upon to protect mariners, especially

those resident in harbor towns (often Aphrodite or Poseidon). The Dioscuri, who appeared in ships' rigging during storms in the form of St Elmo's fire, were popularly viewed as saviors who warded off disaster at sea (Alcaeus fr. 34 Campbell).

Homer was also instrumental in shaping the image of the sea nymphs called Nereids, who were closely associated with the story of Achilles. Thetis, the Nereid mother of the hero, seems to have played an important role in early Greek cosmology; the *Iliad* alludes to her rescue and/or sheltering of Zeus, Dionysus, and Hephaestus in their times of need, while she figures in a fragment of Alcman as "the origin of all," a primal creative force (Calame 1983 fr. 81). Thetis was destined to bear a son more powerful than his father and thus posed a threat to any god, including Zeus, who pursued her. Like Ge, she was imagined as a powerful primordial figure, who first threatened, then helped to bring about, the cosmic order, allowing herself to be subordinated in the process. Slatkin (1991:79) relates Thetis' humble status in Homeric epic to the fact that her cult, unlike those of the Olympian gods, remained geographically limited. One of the few cults of Thetis belonged to Cape Sepias in Thessaly, where the Persians, having suffered heavy damage in a storm, sacrificed to her and the Nereids as local deities (Herodotus 7.191). A venerable Spartan cult of Thetis (Pausanias 3.14.4) may have inspired Alcman's cosmological verses. Altars and thank offerings to the Nereids as a group, on the other hand, are relatively common. Like other marine deities, they could prevent disasters at sea. An early example is Sappho's prayer to Cypris (Aphrodite) and the Nereids (fr. 5 Campbell) for the safe sea journey of her brother Charaxus.

Ino/Leucothea, who was transformed into a Nereid after leaping from a cliff into the sea, saved Odysseus from drowning by giving him her magical veil (*Odyssey* 5.33–8). With her son Palaemon, also a sea-god and guardian of ships, Ino was honored at Poseidon's sanctuary of Isthmia and elsewhere. Leucothea and Palaemon possessed a dual identity as drowned mortals (hence the chthonic and funerary elements in their cults) and as reborn gods who offered salvation to sailors in peril and the hope of an afterlife to those who drowned. Far more than the terrestrial nymphs, the Nereids were associated with death and rebirth. In epic, they play an important role as mourners of Patroclus and Achilles (*Iliad* 18.282–313; *Odyssey* 24.45–89), while post-Homeric literature and art focused on their ability to confer a blessed afterlife on the deceased, just as Thetis brought Achilles to the White Island in the Euxine where he was immortalized (Barringer 1995:49).

The Winds, like the Earth and Sun, were among the elemental forces considered animate, yet only partially endowed with the anthropomorphic forms and divine personalities so characteristic of the Greek gods. Depending on the degree to which particular winds were viewed as personal deities, methods ranging from standard sacrificial appeasement to outright "magical" manipulation were used. The winds could be invoked on an ad hoc basis, as they were when the Greeks faced the Persian fleets in 480 BC. The Delphic oracle advised prayer to the winds on the eve of the battle at Artemisium, and the Athenians prayed to the north wind Boreas to smite the Persians as they sailed south (Herodotus 7.178, 189). When successful, such efforts often led to the founding of altars and sanctuaries, like that of Boreas on the Ilissus river in Athens. Other cities, like Methana near Troezen (Pausanias 2.34.3), provided for annual offerings to the winds because of their effects on crops and their association with seasonal weather patterns. Such

observances are widespread and have a Bronze Age antecedent in the cult of the winds at Mycenaean Knossos.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

The story of "nature deities" in Greece is largely the story of the relationship between people, gods, and the landscape. For discussions of landscape and Greek religion see especially Buxton 1994 and Cole 2004. For sacred gardens see Motte 1973 and Carroll-Spillecke 1989. On the landscape and Greek aesthetics see Segal 1963 and Hurwit 1991. The most comprehensive treatment of the nymphs in myth and cult is Larson 2001. For nympholepsy see Larson 2001:11–20 and Connor 1988. For Pan, indispensable works are Brommer 1949–50 and Borgeaud 1988. For rivers see Brewster 1997 and Isler 1970. (For all the nature deities one should also consult the relevant volumes of *RE* and *LIMC*, which include much information about their cults.) The Athenian sanctuary of Kephisos is discussed in Purvis 2003. The myth of the priority of Ge at Delphi is dissected in Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, while many of Ge's cults are discussed in Hadzisteliou-Price 1978. For Amphitrite at Penteskouphia, see Kaempf-Dimitriadou 1981; for Thetis and the Nereids, see Barringer 1995 and Slatkin 1991.

CHAPTER FOUR

Personification in Greek Religious Thought and Practice

Emma Stafford

Introduction

Personification is an important phenomenon in Greek religious thought and practice. Anthropomorphism is a fundamental characteristic of the Greek pantheon: in both literature and art the Olympian gods are consistently represented as human in form, with human emotions and character traits. In this context it makes sense that the human form should have served as the standard vehicle for representing anything felt to have the slightest claim to divine power. What is striking is the range of things this includes: celestial phenomena, places, divisions of time, states of the body, emotions, abstract qualities, and political concepts. Personifications of all these types can be found in literature from Homer onwards, and in art they are clearly recognizable from at least the beginning of the sixth century; some make only brief appearances, as one-off creations of poet or painter to suit a particular purpose, but others can be found in a variety of contexts, suggesting that they were widely recognized. The fact that these figures are often represented in the company of Olympian gods, and exercising power over mortals, shows that they were held to embody some level of divine power. In a number of cases, however, we can be quite sure of a personification's divine status, because we have evidence that she (or he) was in receipt of prayers, dedications, even sacrifices – exactly the same elements which constitute worship of the Olympian gods. This chapter will survey the phenomenon chronologically, starting with archaic epic and the influence that it had on cult, moving on to fifth-century developments, and concluding with the late classical and hellenistic periods; these last are taken together because most "typically hellenistic" personification cults in fact turn out to have earlier roots.

Before we begin, however, it is important to consider some problems of evidence and to establish the criteria by which we might determine a particular personification's place in Greek religion. From the outset, Greek literature presents us with a

fundamental problem because in classical antiquity there was no differentiation between upper- and lower-case letters, so there is no scope for the convention of personifying a concept simply by giving it an initial capital; neither does Greek use gender to differentiate between animate (he or she) and inanimate (it). The only way to distinguish a personification, therefore, is by looking at the context. At one end of the scale this might be something as slight as the presence of a qualifying verb or adjective indicating human action or feeling – "loving Peace wrapped her arms around him" – the kind of statement which may be no more than a poetic flourish. More substantially, a figure may be linked with others by means of a genealogy, as we shall see especially in Hesiod's *Theogony*, or even be explicitly labeled as divine – "recognizing one's friends is a god" (Euripides, *Helen* 560). It will always remain debatable, however, whether a figure given this kind of literary treatment would have been understood as metaphorical or as a fully personalized divine power. The same "artistic license" problem applies to the many personifications found in Greek vase-painting and (to a lesser extent) sculpture. Here there can at least be no doubt that a figure is personified; the question is rather how we can recognize individual personifications. The practice of representing personifications with attributes which are expressive of the concept's meaning only becomes standard in the hellenistic period. Before this the great majority of personifications in Greek art are represented in the form of idealized young women, indistinguishable one from another and only identifiable if an inscription is present. They may even masquerade as another kind of mythological figure altogether (A.C. Smith 2005): in Figure 4.1, for example, the central female figure is reclining in the company of Dionysus and his satyrs, wearing a Dionysiac ivy wreath and holding a drinking-horn, while the torch resting on her left shoulder indicates the night-time setting of the revels. Without an inscription we would take her to be a maenad, but above her head we can just make out the letters EIRENE, which label her as the personified "Peace."

In short, literature and art present us with a great number of personifications, but leave us uncertain of their status; in order to demonstrate that any figure was recognized as a full-blown deity we need to find evidence for practical cult observance. Very few personifications seem to have been important enough to merit an entire sanctuary of their own, but they might rather share a temple with a major deity, as or simply have an altar. We hear about such locations of worship in the works of writers of the first and second centuries AD such as Plutarch and Pausanias, but only rarely do these provide us with precise information which can be matched up with archaeological evidence from a particular site. More consistently useful is the evidence of inscriptions, which can attest a personification's cult status unequivocally by recording dedications, financial details relating to a sanctuary's accounts, regulations for a festival, or the names of cult personnel. Where evidence such as this is available, there can be no doubt that the personification in question was recognized, at least in the particular locality, as a power worth cultivating.

Epic Poetry and Archaic Personification

We cannot trace the history of personification in Greece before the advent of epic poetry in the late eighth century BC, but there is precedent for the phenomenon in

Figure 4.1 Maenad labelled EIRENE, between two satyrs, in the retinue of Dionysus (almost out of shot to the right). Attic red-figure kalyx-krater, 410–400 BC. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum 1024. Photo: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

earlier eastern Mediterranean cultures (Burkert 2005b; Duchemin 1980). Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite texts inform us of personifications of Order and Right, companions of the great sun-god Shamash; in Egypt, Order is daughter of the sun-god Ra; the major Indo-Iranian god Mithras is Treaty or Contract personified; Zarathustra, the high god of Zoroastrianism, is supported by six powers who personify Good Sense, Truth, Sovereignty, Order, Health, and Immortality. The many personifications which appear in Hesiod's *Theogony* are, therefore, further witness to the eastern influences on the poem discussed earlier in this volume (cf. Chapter 1). Hesiod's cosmogony gives a fundamental role to Eros, personification of the generative principle which drives the entire poem (cf. Chapter 20), and to Earth, who bears first Heaven and then, with him as consort, the first generation of gods. A whole host of elements of the natural world appear mixed in with the divine family, personified by their place in the genealogy: Hills, Ocean, two dozen named rivers, the Sun, the

Moon, Dawn, Night and Day, various winds and stars. A number of abstract qualities are also included: Destiny, Doom, Dreams, Blame, Woe, Indignation, Deceit, Affection, Old Age, and Strife; Suffering, Forgetfulness, Hunger, Pain, Combat, Battles, Murder, Manslaughter, Quarrels, Lies, Disputes, Lawlessness, Folly, and Oath; Persuasion, Fortune, Emulation, Victory, Strength, and Force. A few even play a slightly more substantial role as consorts to Zeus: Cunning thus becomes mother of Athene, and Memory mother of the Muses. Personifications also appear in Homer's works, often in contexts where the poet can exploit the ambiguity between abstraction and personification, as when Terror, Fear, and Strife take to the battlefield (*Iliad* 4.440–3). That Homer is quite capable of inventing personifications for didactic purposes is clear from the allegory of Folly and Prayers (*Iliad* 9.502–12) which Phoenix uses in his attempt to persuade Achilles to be reconciled with Agamemnon (Yamagata 2005). In the *Works and Days* (11–24) Hesiod likewise can introduce the good Strife – something like "Competition" or "Ambition" – purely as a rhetorical device to support the argument that his brother Perses should work harder. It must often remain debatable, then, whether any one of Homer's or Hesiod's personifications is a "proper" god or simply a literary device invented to fill a genealogical gap or to make a point.

A handful of personifications, however, are more fully realized within epic poetry and also appear in art. Archaic art lags a little behind literature in its portrayal of (recognizable) personifications because the practice of inscribing characters' names does not become widespread until the late seventh century. The earliest personified figures to be identified in this way are those on the Chest of Cypselus, an extraordinarily ornate cedar-wood chest decorated with carving and inlaid ivory and gold which was made around 600 BC. This is preserved for us in Pausanias' detailed description (5.17.5–19.10) and provides a directory of the most popular mythological characters of the time, which include a number of personifications. Night holds the children Sleep and Death, one white and one black, asleep in her arms; Justice is a beautiful woman throttling and beating the ugly Injustice; Strife, "most ugly in appearance," stands between the dueling Hector and Ajax; Fear, "with a lion's head," appears on the shield of Agamemnon. All of these figures can also be seen in extant vase-painting of the later sixth century. Most frequently depicted are Sleep and his brother Death, in a scene inspired by their role in *Iliad* 16, where they are tasked to carry the hero Sarpedon's body home to Lycia. The character of Sleep (Hypnos) is more fully developed in *Iliad* 14 (231–90, 352–62), when Hera visits him on Lemnos to seek his assistance in her plot to distract Zeus' attention while she helps the Greeks: Sleep is initially reluctant, because he only narrowly avoided Zeus' wrath when he helped on a previous occasion, but, though unmoved by Hera's initial bribe of a golden throne, he is won over by her offer of marriage to one of the Graces. This highly personalized figure bears comparison with Hesiod's Sleep, child of Night, who shares a dark home with his brother Death (*Theogony* 211–12, 755–66). The evidence for Sleep actually being worshiped is thinly scattered and mostly of hellenistic or later date (Stafford 2003), but the substantialness of the character established by Homer and Hesiod and reflected in art shows that he can already be conceived of as a fully personalized god in the archaic period.

Progression from a minor role in epic and archaic art to later cult status can be further demonstrated in the cases of Fear (Phobos) and of Youth (Hebe). We have

already touched on Fear as a participant in battle, but elsewhere in the *Iliad* he very briefly takes on a more substantial character as "dear son" of Ares (13.299), whose chariot he and Terror yoke at the war-god's command (15.119–20). The two brothers become Ares' actual charioteers in the sixth-century poem the *Shield of Heracles* (463–5), when the god goes into battle against Heracles to avenge the death of his son Kyknos. Fear (alone) is identified by an inscription as Ares' charioteer in this context on an Attic black-figure oinochoe of 540–530 BC attributed to Lydos (Berlin F1732), on analogy with which he can be recognized in half a dozen more versions of the scene from the last third of the sixth century. Fear completely vanishes from the visual arts after this, but is certainly attested as a figure of cult around 450 BC, when he is one of the gods thanked in an inscription from Selinous (*IG* xiv 268) for victory in battle, and sacrifices to Fear on the eve of a battle are mentioned, for example, by Plutarch (*Theseus* 27; *Alexander* 31). The same author attests a sanctuary of Fear at Sparta, commenting that the Spartans had established it "near to the ephors' dining room, when they elevated this office nearly as high as a monarchy" (*Cleomenes* 9), which helps to date the cult as early as the mid-sixth century (Richer 2005a; cf. 1999a and 1998b).

A sixth-century date could also be suggested for the cult of Youth, though the evidence is not conclusive. Like Fear, she has Olympian parentage, as daughter of Zeus and Hera, and she plays a minor part in the *Iliad*, performing such menial tasks on Olympus as pouring nectar, preparing Hera's chariot, and bathing the wounded Ares (*Iliad* 4.2–3, 5.722, 5.905). She acquires a more significant role, however, when she becomes part of Heracles' story as the wife with whom "he lives happily in the fine seat of snowy Olympus" after completing his labors (*Homeric Hymn* 15.7–8). There is some debate over the earliest literary attestations of the story, but the marriage is unambiguously depicted in art from ca. 600 BC, with examples from Paros and Samos, as well as the Peloponnese and Attica, demonstrating the wide dissemination of the story during the first half of the sixth century. There is later evidence for Youth's presence in the cult of Heracles and his family in Attica: she had an altar in Heracles' sanctuary at Cynosarges (Pausanias 1.19.3), while the main sanctuary of the deme of Aixone was dedicated to Youth, with a priest of the Children of Heracles, a priestess of Youth and Alcmene, and a sacrifice for Youth "and the other gods" (Jameson 2005:18–19). A good case can also be made for rituals celebrating Heracles' and Youth's *hieros gamos* ("sacred marriage") at Thespiae in Boeotia and on the island of Kos, where the sanctuary they shared with Hera was used for human wedding celebrations (Stafford 2005a, 2005b). The one area where Youth appears independently of Heracles in cult is the Argolid. In the Argive Heraion, the chryselephantine statue of Hera by the fifth-century sculptor Polyclitus was accompanied by a statue of Youth by his pupil Naukydes, "this too of gold and ivory" (Pausanias 2.17.5); the costly materials involved suggest that Youth had an important role in the sanctuary. A cult of Youth alone, which certainly sounds ancient, is also attested for nearby Phlious. Pausanias (2.13.3–4) describes a grove of cypress trees on the acropolis, "and a very holy sanctuary of ancient date" belonging to a goddess whom "the most ancient people of Phlious" used to call Ganymeda but was later called Youth. The sanctuary functioned as a place of asylum, released prisoners dedicated their shackles by hanging them from the cypress trees, and there was an annual festival called "Ivy-Cutters" (Kissotomoi). Unfortunately Pausanias offers no

account of this festival, nor does he expand on his obscure comment that "they keep no statue in secret, and there is no openly shown one either, though they do have a sacred story to explain this custom."

Two personifications worth special mention here are those who shared the sanctuary at Rhamnous on the northeast coast of Attica. It is quite exceptional for such a sanctuary to be dedicated to a personification with no major Olympian as associate, but both Nemesis and Themis have substantial mythological profiles in archaic literature and art to support their claim to cult status (Stafford 2000:45–96). The word *nemesis* is used in an abstract sense in Homer, denoting "righteous anger" or "indignation" aroused by injustice. She first appears personified in Hesiod, as a daughter of Night (*Theogony* 223–4) and abandoning the corrupt world at the end of the race of iron, in company with Shame (*Works and Days* 197–201). A similarly allegorical element can be seen in the account of her rape by Zeus, which makes her mother of Helen, as related in the sixth-century Epic Cycle poem the *Cypria*: the reluctant Nemesis keeps changing shape as she flees by land and sea, "for shame and indignation [*nemesis*] distressed her heart" (fr. 9 Bernabé = fr. 7 Davies). Like *nemesis*, *themis* is hard to translate exactly, but means something like "divine law" or "the natural order of things," a set of ideas articulated in the genealogy which makes her mother (by Zeus) of the Fates and the Seasons, the latter named by Hesiod as Lawfulness, Justice, and Peace (*Theogony* 901–6; see Rudhardt 1999). Homer presents Themis as a regular denizen of Olympus, described like many other female characters as "fair-cheeked"; she offers wine and sympathy to Hera, who tells her to "rule over the gods in their house at the fairly divided feast" (*Iliad* 15.87–92), and she summons assemblies, both of the gods (*Iliad* 20.4–6) and of mortals (*Odyssey* 2.68–9). Later archaic poems make her Zeus' advisor: at the beginning of the *Cypria* she plays a vital role by suggesting to Zeus that he punish man's corruption and reduce the earth's over-population by setting the Trojan War in train. This literary profile is further fleshed out by a few appearances in archaic art: Themis is amongst the deities (names inscribed) attending the wedding of Peleus and Thetis on the Attic black-figure dinos by Sophilos, ca. 580 BC (London 1971.11–11.1), which also features Youth; Pausanias mentions a statue of Themis in the temple of Hera at Olympia by a mid-sixth-century sculptor, which stood beside a seated group of the Seasons (5.17.1); and around 525 BC Themis, her name again inscribed, takes part in the Gigantomachy portrayed on the north frieze of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi.

The rape of Nemesis is localized by later sources at Rhamnous, where she was clearly the principal of the two deities. Extensive archaeological exploration (Petrakos 2000) has demonstrated that the sanctuary was already in use in the archaic period: there are remains of an early sixth-century building which was probably the first temple of Nemesis, replaced towards the end of the century by another; a third building erected shortly after 500 BC may have been added to provide an independent location for worship of the sanctuary's second deity, Themis. The sanctuary probably suffered damage during the Persian Wars, and underwent significant refurbishment and expansion in the middle of the fifth century, culminating with the erection ca. 430 BC of the temple the remains of which can still be seen today. Inscriptions recording the sanctuary's financial affairs support the picture of rapid expansion, with just a few hundred drachmas being paid to the sanctuary's administrators at the beginning of the fifth century, while in the years ca. 450–440 the

sanctuary is in a position to make loans totaling up to 56,000 drachmas (*IG* i^3 248). This increase in the sanctuary's wealth was almost certainly due to a perception that Nemesis had been instrumental in the defeat of the Persians, an idea much alluded to in connection with the cult statue made by Phidias' pupil Agorakritos and installed ca. 430–420 BC. Pausanias (1.33.2–3) records a tradition that the statue was made out of a block of stone which the Persians had brought with them for making a trophy when they landed at Marathon in 490 BC, "thinking contemptuously that nothing could stop them from taking Athens." However unreliable this tale may be, fragments of the actual statue show that the scene on its base alluded to the destruction of Troy, a mythological theme employed elsewhere to symbolize the Greeks' historical victory over the Persians. The sanctuary's fifth-century association with Nemesis, then, is well documented, and inscriptions from the late fourth and third centuries attest a festival called the Great Nemesia celebrated on 19 Hecatombaeon (June/July), which included athletic contests for the young men stationed at the fort at Rhamnous as part of their military training. Two dedications of the same period attest separate offices for priestesses of Nemesis and Themis, held on an annual basis; both inscriptions employ the phrase "in the priestesshood of [woman's name]," which sounds like a dating formula, suggesting that the positions were highly regarded in the community.

A sixth-century date for Themis' introduction to Rhamnous might be supported by the importance of the concept she embodies to late archaic Attic society, and by some evidence for her cult in archaic Athens. There is a small sanctuary on the south slope of the Acropolis which probably belonged to the Athenian Themis, and a priestess of Themis made a small dedication in the neighboring sanctuary of Asclepius around 250 BC (*IG* ii^2 1534.252). The earliest attestation, however, is a line from Nicomachus' calendar of sacrifices, set up in the Royal Stoa ca. 401 BC to record revisions of regulations established by Solon in the early sixth century (*LSS* 10). This specifies the expenditure of 12 drachmas on "a ewe for Themis" in the month Metageitnion (July–August), indicating a very modest sacrifice. We cannot be certain that the sacrifice to Themis was on Solon's original list, but there is some support for a late archaic date in the form of personal names derived from Themis, which begin to appear in Attica towards the end of the sixth century, the earliest example being the famous general Themistocles, born ca. 525 BC. As Parker (2000a) argues, such theophoric names are suggestive of the particular deity's local significance, and we see Themis-related names again in epigraphic evidence from Thessaly, where the names Themistion, Themison, Themistocles, Themistogenes, and Pasithemis are attested. Themis does indeed seems to have an important place in the Thessalian pantheon, even replacing Hera as Zeus' consort (Miller 1974). Evidence for her standing includes inscriptions attesting a local month name "Themistios" which, by analogy with what we know of the Athenian calendar (cf. Chapter 13), is likely to have been named after an ancient festival celebrated during that month in Themis' honor.

Classical Personification: The Fifth Century

Fifth-century literature continues to present us with personification at all levels, and it can sometimes be difficult to tell where to draw the line between rhetorical device and

a figure which the ancient audience would have taken more seriously. When Euripides' Cyclops declares that "Wealth is the only god for the wise" (*Cyclops* 316), we may be right to laugh at his cynicism, but there is a little evidence that Wealth (Ploutos) had a place in the Athenian cult of Demeter. Conversely, Pindar's address to Quiet (Hesychia) – "Kindly Quiet, daughter of Justice who makes cities very great, you who hold the sovereign keys of councils and of wars . . . " (*Pythian* 8.1–4) – exhibits several formal features of the hymn genre, suggestive of real cult status, and yet the fact that Quiet appears nowhere else in literature or art gives grounds for suspecting that she is here the product of poetic license. The most important development in classical literature as far as personification is concerned, however, is drama. Personifications feature in the dialogue of both tragedy and comedy, but most significantly a number actually appear as characters on stage. In surviving tragedy we see just three – Might and Force in the *Prometheus Bound* and Madness in Euripides' *Madness of Heracles* – but many more must have had a part in lost plays. Several are included in Pollux's list of tragic characters requiring "special masks" (4.141–2): a river, a mountain, Justice, Death, Madness, Frenzy, Arrogance, the Indos river, City, Persuasion, Muses, Seasons, Deceit, Drunkenness, Sloth, Envy. In comedy personified characters play an even more important part. Aristophanes has Just and Unjust Arguments debating at length in the *Clouds*, while a character called The People has a central role in the *Knights*, as does Wealth in the *Wealth*, which also features Poverty; in the *Peace*, Peace is attended by Vintage and Festival, and the silent Sovereignty and Reconciliation appear in *Birds* and *Lysistrata* respectively. Several lost comedies humorously elaborated on the old idea of the poet's relationship with his Muse: "Cratinus created the fiction that Comedy was his wife and wished to leave the marital home and bring a suit against him for ill-treatment . . . " (scholium on *Knights* 400; see Sommerstein 2005). Such characters may be purely inventions of the playwright to suit the dramatic circumstances of the moment, but the fact that personifications were presented in physical form must have helped to give them substance in the popular imagination, as must the increased range of personified figures to be found in fifth-century vase-painting. These enjoy a particular vogue in the work of the Meidias Painter and his circle around 420–400 BC, which is busy with female figures accompanying Aphrodite with names like Happiness, Play, Lawfulness, Harmony, Persuasion, Good Fortune, Fair Fame, Health, Freedom-from-Toil; to these we might add the youthful winged males, duplicates of Eros, labeled as Desire, Yearning, and even Sweet-Talk. These figures have often been dismissed as superficial decorative devices, contributing to a general "feel-good" atmosphere, but close study reveals that they are carefully chosen and arranged to convey sophisticated messages, playing an important part in the development of allegory in Greek art (Borg 2005; Shapiro 1986). Personifications also begin to appear in free-standing sculpture, as we already seen in Agorakritos' Nemesis and Naukydes' Youth, although they are only identifiable where a specific cult context is known.

In three cases of cults which are first attested in the fifth century the personification is closely associated with an Olympian deity. The first also has some small mythological pedigree of her own: Persuasion (Peitho) appears briefly in Hesiod (*Works and Days* 73–5) alongside the Graces as Aphrodite's assistants in the creation of Pandora, whom they endow with the power of seduction. Inscriptions attest that Persuasion and the Graces were worshiped together on the islands of Paros and Thasos in the

hellenistic period, while a single inscription from late fifth-century Thasos gives us a "sanctuary of Persuasion" alone (*IG* xii 8.360). Another "sanctuary of Persuasion" is located in the agora at Sicyon in the Argolid, though Pausanias' account (2.7.7–8) of the purification ritual enacted there may indicate that the sanctuary was dedicated to Apollo and Artemis "the Persuaded" rather than Persuasion herself. Most other evidence, however, puts Persuasion in close association with Aphrodite, the two even appearing in one or two locations as a single deity, "Aphrodite Persuasion." Most extensively documented is the cult of Persuasion at Athens, where she is worshiped alongside Aphrodite Pandemos, "of All the People." A small sanctuary on the southwest slope of the Acropolis can be identified as that of Aphrodite Pandemos and Persuasion on the basis of Pausanias' mention of their statues (1.22.3) and of several inscriptions found in the vicinity. It is a matter of debate how early either goddess became established there: an ancient tradition attributes the establishment of Aphrodite Pandemos' cult to Solon, which is not entirely implausible, but Persuasion was probably a later addition, arriving in the late sixth century (Pirenne-Delforge 1991) or towards the end of the fifth (Stafford 2000:121–9). We have unequivocal evidence for Persuasion's cult status from the mid-fourth century, when state sacrifices to her are mentioned by Isocrates (*Antidosis* 259) and Demosthenes (*Prooimia* 54). The importance of persuasion as a concept in the classical period can certainly be demonstrated by a study of fifth-century literature (Buxton 1982), which naturally tends to emphasize its rhetorical aspect, but in vase-painting, as in cult, Persuasion personified consistently appears in the company of Aphrodite, bringing to the fore the more erotic side of her character. That this "seductive" aspect was important in cult is further suggested by Plutarch's assertion that Persuasion is one of the five gods invoked by those getting married (*Roman Questions*, *Moralia* 264b), and that she and the Graces used to be worshiped after marriage "so that couples might persuade each other to do what they want, and not fight or be contentious" (*Advice to the Bride and Groom*, *Moralia* 138d; Stafford 1999).

Unlike all the figures we have considered so far, Fair Fame (Eukleia) has no mythological profile in archaic literature and art, but her earliest appearance in cult does link her closely with an Olympian goddess. Pausanias (9.17.1) reports a temple of "Artemis Fair Fame" at Thebes, with a statue by the fourth-century sculptor Scopas, and the goddess' cult was already well established in Boeotia by the early fifth century according to Plutarch (*Aristides* 20). He tells the story of a man called Euchidas, who ran from Plataia to Delphi and back in a day in order to fetch new fire, a ritual purification after the final defeat of the Persians; having run 125 miles in a single day, Euchidas promptly collapsed and died, but was honored by burial within the sanctuary of Artemis Eukleia. Even if the anecdote is not entirely reliable, Plutarch is likely to have been well informed about sanctuaries in his native Boeotia. He goes on to comment that "most people believe Eukleia to be Artemis, and call her by that name," although some say that she is the daughter of Heracles and Myrto, worshiped in Boeotia and Locris; "there is an altar and statue established to her in every marketplace, and brides and grooms sacrifice to her." On the basis of Plutarch's generalization, scholars have assumed that a festival called simply "the Eukleia," attested at Delphi and at Corinth and further implied by the month name Eukleios at Corcyra (a Corinthian colony), was in honor of Artemis. Some details of the Corinthian festival are incidentally supplied by Xenophon's indignant account

(*Hellenica* 4.4.2) of the massacre which took place on the last day of its celebration in spring 392 BC. The day was specifically chosen by the revolutionaries because they thought "there would be more people in the marketplace to kill," and many people were killed while watching musical or dramatic competitions. At Athens, on the other hand, Fair Fame seems to be quite independent of Artemis, with a temple of her own which was "a dedication from the Persians who fought at Marathon" (Pausanias 1.14.5); this should be somewhere in or near the agora, although it has not been identified on the ground. Fair Fame appears together with Lawfulness (Eunomia) on a number of vases of ca. 410–400 BC, which provide some support for the suggestion that a joint cult of the two personifications began at Athens in the late fifth century, although it is only in the late hellenistic period that we have firm evidence for this, in the form of inscriptions mentioning a priest and a sanctuary of the pair. It has been suggested that the Athenian cult might have derived from the Plataean one, or that it was influenced by a joint cult on the island of Aegina (Shapiro 1993:70–8), although the latter is attested only by an allusion in Bacchylides to Aegina being guided by Virtue together with "crown-loving Fair Fame and wise Lawfulness" (*Odes* 13.182–6; ca. 480 BC).

Health (Hygieia) likewise appears in cult before we find her represented in art or literature. Her early history in the Peloponnese is hazy, but we have unusually clear evidence for her introduction into Athenian cult alongside the healing god Asclepius. The event is actually recorded on the early fourth-century "Telemachus Monument," a stele with relief sculpture and inscriptions (*IG* ii^2 4960), which gives precise years for various stages of the sanctuary's development, beginning in 420/419 BC: "Telemachus founded the sanctuary and altar to Asclepius first, and Health, the sons of Asclepius and daughters ... ." The stele was found on the south slope of the Acropolis to the west of the Theater of Dionysus, on the site of Asclepius' sanctuary, which seems to have been substantially developed in the middle of the fourth century. Asclepius' sons are the healing heroes Podaleiros and Machaon, his daughters usually named as Health, Cure-All (Panakeia), Iaso, and Akeso (both names related to words for "healing"). Pride of place clearly goes to Health, both on the Telemachus Monument and in other textual references to the family, and it is Health whom we see most frequently in art. Her appearance on half a dozen or so Attic vases of ca. 420–400 BC may well be due to her recent arrival as a cult figure, but more significant of her divine status are the seventy or more votive reliefs of the late fifth and fourth centuries on which she features. This category of relief sculpture is by definition from a cult context and the images employ the convention of representing deities on a larger scale than humans, which confirms that Health is regarded as on a par with the god Asclepius whom she accompanies. Some of these reliefs are from the Athenian Asclepieion, and Health's important role here is further indicated by her pairing with Asclepius in later inscriptions: "it is the ancestral custom of the physicians who are in the service of the state to sacrifice to Asclepius and to Hygieia twice each year on behalf of their own bodies and of those they have healed" (*IG* ii^2 772.9–13; ca. 250 BC). In addition to the reliefs, the image of Health appeared in sanctuaries of Asclepius all over the Greek world from the mid-fourth century onwards in the form of statues. Art historians divide these into a number of iconographical types, but in all of them Health is a young woman, demurely dressed, with a snake around her shoulders or beside her, which she feeds from a shallow dish: for the first time, a

personified figure is made recognizable by something other than an inscription (Stafford 2000:147–71; cf. Stafford 2005d).

Late Classical and Hellenistic Personification: The Fourth Century and After

The range of figures found in literature and art expands still further in the fourth and third centuries. Orators make particular use of personification to embellish their points – as Aeschines cites "the great goddess" Rumor as a witness to the iniquities of Timarchus (*Against Timarchus* 1.28–30) – and the technique becomes a standard of later rhetorical handbooks (see Stafford 2000:5–8). In the everyday world of New Comedy the gods in general have a lower profile than on the classical stage, but we find Ignorance, Fortune, and Proof speaking the prologues of Menander's *Rape of the Locks*, the *Shield*, and another play. Third-century poetry is less innovative with its personifications, but rather elaborates on figures found earlier – as Callimachus addresses an entire hymn to the island of Delos, Apollo's birthplace, who had had just a small speaking part in the archaic *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (lines 50–88). Personified places are also used in fourth-century south Italian vase-painting to indicate the location of a scene – as Nemea watches Heracles wrestling with the lion – alongside a selection of personified natural phenomena and yet more abstract ideas, such as Force, Folly, Madness, Frenzy, Envy, and Punishment. At Athens, meanwhile, in addition to votive reliefs the fourth century is notable for a category of "document reliefs," stelae with inscriptions recording decrees of the Athenian Council and Assembly accompanied by images of such figures as The People, The Council, Democracy, Discipline, and Victory (see A.C. Smith 1997). All of these may of course be no more substantial in status than the rhetorical devices of literature, but they do once again contribute to making the figures generally familiar.

A particular feature of fourth-century cult is the introduction of a number of political personifications. Representing political entities and concepts in human form is of course far from being a new idea – we have already noted Victory, Justice, Lawfulness, and Peace in archaic literature and art (and see A.C. Smith 1999 on early classical developments) – but the fourth century sees a great expansion in the number of concepts and their prominence. There is room here for only the briefest of overviews of the phenomenon, but Thériault (1996) shows how rewarding a closer study of an individual cult can be. Concord (Homonoia) is first definitely attested as a goddess in the 330s BC, in the "Decree on Concord" from Mytilene (*SEG* 36.750), where she is mentioned alongside Zeus of Concord and Justice as receiving public prayers. At around the same date Concord makes her only appearance in extant vase-painting, on an Apulian pelike attributed to the Darius Painter (Malibu 86.AE.23), in a scene where Kassiopeia seems to be begging her daughter Andromeda's forgiveness. Also contemporary are the earliest coins to feature a female figure inscribed OMONOIA, struck by the Greek city of Kimissa in Sicily, the reverse showing an altar with flames on top, which has been reasonably interpreted as a sign of Concord's cult status. From these beginnings, Thériault demonstrates how the cult of Concord

spread from end to end of the Greek world during the hellenistic period, the goddess being invoked occasionally in a private context as embodiment of family harmony, but most often as patron of concord within and between cities, the popularity of this public figure making perfect sense in the politically turbulent hellenistic world. Particularly striking is the cult of a "Concord of the Hellenes" at Plataea, first mentioned in an honorific decree of the mid-third century BC (Etienne and Piérart 1975). It seems to have been integrated into the older cult of Zeus the Liberator, established in 479 BC to celebrate the final defeat of the Persians, and is plausibly explained as promoting the ideal of Greek unity by reference to this paradigmatic instance of cooperation between Greek states.

At Athens, three political personifications appear in an important inscription of the late 330s, which records income from the sale of skins of animals sacrificed at various state festivals (*IG* ii^2 1496; Parker 1996:227–37). The skins from the sacrifices to Peace (Eirene) fetched between 713 and 874 drachmas in different years, which puts her festival on a par with the City Dionysia and means that, at a very rough estimate, at least eighty oxen were slaughtered in Peace's honor. By the same estimate Democracy (Demokratia) received at least forty oxen, and Good Fortune (Agathe Tyche) at least ten. Peace was already a familiar figure in literature and art (see, e.g., Figure 4.1), and in 421 BC the idea of instituting a cult in her honor had provided the central plot of Aristophanes' *Peace*, but we have a fair amount of evidence to suggest that the official cult was actually established in the mid-370s, with an annual festival celebrated on 16 Hecatombaeon (Stafford 2000:173–97). The statue-group of Peace holding the child Wealth by Kephisodotos, ca. 375–360 BC, seen in the Athenian agora by Pausanias (1.8.2) and much copied in the Roman imperial period, is usually associated with the cult, but in the simple message which it conveys – that peace nurtures wealth – it also represents an important step in the development of visual allegory on a monumental scale. Democracy has some small pedigree as a personification in late fifth- and fourth-century art, but the skin-sale record is the first certain attestation of her cult. It specifies that the sacrifice was in the month Boedromion (August/September), possibly commemorating the anniversary of a "thanksgiving for freedom" first celebrated on the restoration of democracy on 12 Boedromion 403 BC (Plutarch, *The Glory of Athens* 7 = *Moralia* 349f). Inscriptions of the late third century further attest a priest of Democracy and a procession in her honor (*IG* ii^2 5029a; *SEG* 29.116). We have the base of a statue of Democracy which stood in the agora, dedicated by the Council in 333/2 BC (*IG* ii^2 2791); this has sometimes been associated with the large-scale female torso Agora S2370, though the identification is problematic (Palagia 1994, 1982). The earliest extant image of Democracy shows the goddess crowning The People (Demos) on the relief which accompanies Eukrates' anti-tyranny decree of 337/6 BC (*SEG* 12.87), and the two figures are obviously closely related. Mikalson (1998:172–8) argues that it is indeed the idea of democracy that is expressed by the cult of the divine Demos and the Graces which was established in the late third century in a prominent position in the northwest corner the agora, not far from the Dipylon Gate, where the family of Eurykleides and his son Mikion served as priests.

The last of the three, Good Fortune, certainly had a public aspect, as the skin-sale record itself attests. In addition, the fourth-century political leader Lycurgus mentions a temple of Good Fortune in a speech about his administration, there is

reference to the sanctuary's refurbishment in a contemporary inscription of 335/4 BC (*IG* ii^2 333), and a statue of Good Fortune by Praxiteles is supposed to have stood outside the Prytaneion, center of Athens' political life (Aelian, *Varia Historia* 9.39). Good Fortune also appears, however, to have been invoked in private contexts, such as a fourth-century votive relief dedicated by a family to a rather idiosyncratic group: "to Zeus Fulfiller and of Friendship, to the god's mother Friendship, and to the god's wife Good Luck" (Copenhagen 1558; *IG* ii^2 4627). The cult of Good Fortune does appear outside Athens too, but in many cities the figure who would rise to prominence in the hellenistic period was the potentially ambivalent Fortune (Tyche). Inscriptions offer evidence for her cult already in the fourth century on Thera, Amorgos, and Rhodes and at Mylasa, and Pausanias mentions a number of sanctuaries of Fortune which appear to be prehellenistic; his information is often unspecific – at Argos the temple is of the "very ancient Fortune" (2.20.3), and at Pharai the statue is "ancient" (4.30.3) – but he indicates a date by naming fourth-century sculptors as responsible for statues at Megara (1.43.6) and Thebes (9.16.1). The increasing popularity of the cult in the hellenistic period is reflected in contemporary literature and art (Matheson 1994), and plausibly explained as due to the significance of personal luck in the uncertain post-Alexander world. At a state level, too, the idea of the city's Fortune was especially useful to newly founded cities in Asia Minor which had no traditional patron deity to call upon. The concept is first given physical form in Eutychides' Tyche of Antioch statue ca. 300 BC, a seated female figure wearing a crown representing the city's fortifications, while a youth swimming at her feet represents the river Orontes; according to Pausanias (6.2.7) the statue was "greatly honored by the local people." Another hellenistic statue type shows Fortune holding a cornucopia, and sometimes a plump child, symbolic of the material well-being she has the power to bestow on individual worshipers.

Fortune's attributes bring us to a final example which is not a new figure, but rather a hellenistic development of the earlier cult of Nemesis. The city of Smyrna, which had been destroyed by the Lydians in the early sixth century, was refounded in the early years of the third century by Alexander's generals Antigonos and Lysimachos (Strabo C464). Pausanias' account of this refoundation (7.5.2) is problematic, and fails to shed much light on why the people of Smyrna "now believe in two Nemeseis instead of one," but it does locate the goddesses' sanctuary on the slopes of Mount Pagos, exactly where the new city was situated. A number of inscriptions from the Roman imperial period indicate more precisely that the sanctuary stood on the south side of the new Smyrna's agora, and we have useful evidence for the appearance of the hellenistic cult statues from later coins (Figure 4.2). The Nemeseis are shown holding a measuring-rod and a bridle, which remain their two most constant attributes in later art, and which are conveniently explained by an epigram in the *Greek Anthology* (16.223): "we must do nothing beyond measure nor be unbridled in our speech." Another epigram (12.229) suggests that the way the goddesses pull at a fold of the peplos might reflect an apotropaic gesture of "spitting under the fold" to avert Nemesis' attentions. These features are all absent from the fifth-century statue of Nemesis at Rhamnous, which, like personifications in contemporary vase-painting, is indistinguishable from any other female figure. The concept which the Smyrna statues represent has not necessarily changed, but the way in which it is expressed is typically hellenistic (Stafford 2000:97–103, 2005c).

Figure 4.2a and b The two Nemeseis of Smyrna, inside their temple (left) and with their attributes, the measuring rod and bridle. Drawings by Sheila Bewley from bronze coins of Smyrna, minted in the reign of Hadrian

Conclusion

The personifications which appear throughout Greek art and literature take on new life when we consider the place that so many of them had in actual religious practice. In the archaic period, epic poetry provides a basic mythological pedigree for many figures which would later acquire cult status, and a few of these cults can be traced back to at least the sixth century. Cults first attested in the fifth century are less dependent on the epic tradition, but often involve close association between the personification and a more major deity, in some cases even being attested as a cult title. In the fourth century and later, we see the introduction of personification cults entirely independent of such association, sometimes with little or no prior development in literature and art, which probably owe their existence to contemporary political concerns. The figures discussed here certainly do not constitute a comprehensive list, but are just a selection of some of the better-documented cases, and even these have been only briefly outlined. In particular, there has not been space to elaborate on the historical circumstances which form the context for each cult's inception and subsequent development, and provide the most interesting avenue for further study. I hope, however, to have demonstrated that even the most abstract of concepts could quite easily be conceived of as a fully personalized deity, worthy of worship by individuals and the state, and to have justified my opening assertion that personification played an important part in Greek religion.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Though they have been superseded by more recent studies in some particulars, Deubner 1902–9, Nilsson 1952b and Hamdorf 1964 are seminal works on the place of personification in Greek religion, while Foucart et al. 1917 is the first to set the Greek material in the broader context of Egyptian, Roman, and Semitic personification. The fullest recent discussion, however, is my own book (Stafford 2000), which includes more detailed consideration than has been possible

here of general issues – definitions, problems of evidence, ancient analysis of the phenomenon, the question of personifications' predominantly feminine gender – as well as case studies of the cults of Themis, Nemesis, Persuasion, Health, and Peace. Various aspects of Greek personification are discussed in papers collected in Stafford and Herrin 2005; in addition to papers cited individually in this chapter, see Parisinou on personifications of celestial light, Burton on the gender of death, Kovaleva on Eros at the Panathenaea, Lazongas on the odd case of the personified pomegranate, Allan on the cult of Opportunity, Murray on the Muses, Seaman on representations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Yatromanolakis on the personified city. Shapiro 1993 provides an accessible and fairly comprehensive survey of personifications in Greek art between 600 and 400 BC; the story is continued into the fourth century in Aellen's (1994) richly illustrated discussion of the role of personification in south Italian vase-painting. Individual personified characters usually have an entry in *LIMC*, which gives a summary of the figure's place in literature and cult before cataloging her (or his) appearances in Greek (and Roman) art; entries in the older *RE* can be useful, though they are inevitably outdated in some areas. Gombrich 1971 and Webster 1954 are still worth reading for overviews of Greek personification, while Whitman 1987 provides a good account of allegory in Greek literature. Specific points may be pursued by following up references in the text.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Dead

D. Felton

What happens to us when we die? Our bodies decay, but is there a spirit, a soul, an essence of our personalities that survives us? And if so, how should we deal with the dead? How can we speak of them in terms we can relate to? Can we contact them – can they contact us? Religions, philosophies, and folk beliefs – past and present – try to provide answers to such questions as these and, as in many societies, Greek beliefs about survival after death varied widely and were not particularly consistent. Some Greeks denied any possibility of an afterlife, saying that the soul perished with the body; others, such as Plato, believed the soul was immortal. Some believed that the spirit survived death, but as an insensate shell of its former self in a meaningless existence, lacking intelligence or understanding; others believed that the individual soul lived on after death with a recognizable personality. In the *Odyssey*, gloomy ghosts survive the body only to wander in a dreary, depressing afterlife; other works depict an underworld where life goes on rather as it had on earth. Also in the *Odyssey*, most of the dead know nothing of what goes on in the world of the living, whereas some Greeks believed the dead were sources of arcane knowledge and could be summoned by necromancy to share such knowledge with the living. Some philosophical sects, such as the Pythagoreans, believed in metempsychosis, or transmigration of the soul; others, including the Peripatetics, admitted that they just didn't know what to believe and remained generally ambiguous and noncommittal on the subject. The Epicureans were perhaps the most resistant to the existence of supernatural phenomena of any kind, including restless spirits, and tried to provide material explanations for them.

Honoring the Dead

Whether the average Greek believed in the soul or not, he at least believed that certain rites were due to the dead. Death was a passage to be marked with ceremony, and

despite the lack of a universal doctrine about the nature of the soul, actual funeral and mourning customs in ancient Greece were relatively uniform (Richardson 1985:64). The living needed a way to acknowledge the strangeness of death and a way to comfort each other. So, the Greeks held certain burial rituals to be quite important. And despite the varying attitudes toward the possibility of an afterlife, there existed a widespread belief that if the dead weren't properly laid to rest their spirits might take revenge and haunt the living. Even if a good number of Greeks didn't believe in the soul or its survival after death, a pervasive folk-belief in vengeful ghosts might at least be seen as an expression of guilt for failing to observe proper rituals. And, lest individual families failed to tend their ancestors' tombs, some Greek cities such as Athens held annual state festivals to honor the dead.

The Greeks practiced both inhumation and cremation, though the popularity of one method or the other varied over place and time. For example, archaeological evidence indicates that throughout Greece, and in Mycenae in particular, inhumation prevailed from ca. 1650 to ca. 1200 BC. At this point, cremation became popular, and was even preferred in Attica until ca. 900, when it was replaced by pit burials. In the archaic period cremation grew more popular again, but evidence from the classical period seems to show no preference, although in fifth-century tragedy cremation remained the usual method for disposal of the dead (Burkert 1985:191; Garland 2001:34). In the hellenistic period inhumation prevailed (Garland 2001:34). The manner of disposal was perhaps less important than the accompanying rites performed over the body. Ninth-century Greek geometric vases left as grave goods in the Kerameikos depict mourning rituals such as a body lying on a bier surrounded by women tearing their hair, or a body being carried out for burial. In the eighth-century *Iliad* (which also preserves some traditions of earlier periods) King Priam risks journeying to the Greek camp to beg Achilles for the body of Hector, and the epic ends with Hector's funeral. In the fifth century, Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Antigone* 'show how a dead person's relatives will risk or suffer death, rather than leave a body unburied' (Richardson 1985:51); in the *Antigone* even a symbolic burial, the scattering of dirt on a body, sufficiently honors the heroine's dead brother.

A typical Greek burial ritual included several stages, in which the women of the family played a prominent role. First came the 'laying out' of the corpse, or *prothesis*, during which the women would wash the body, anoint it, dress it by wrapping it in cloth, and lay it on a bier for the family to perform the traditional lament and pay their last respects (Kurtz and Boardman 1971:144; Garland 2001:23–31). Once coinage became widespread, in the sixth century and later, a coin was placed in the mouth or hand of the deceased to symbolize payment for Charon, the mythological ferryman who rowed the dead across the river Styx, the final boundary between the living and the dead. After the *prothesis*, which lasted one day, the body would then be transferred at night to its burial site in a formal but quiet procession, the *ekphora* or 'carrying out' of the body, accompanied by mourners and torches (Garland 2001:31–4). At the cremation or burial site the family would make offerings of food, wine, olive oil, and various household possessions – such as weapons for the men or jewelry for the women – burning or burying them with the body, the idea being, at least in part, that the dead person might have use for these items in the afterlife. The funeral would end with a family banquet in honor of the dead, the *perideipnon*, or "feast around," though the banquet was held not at the gravesite but

back at the family home (Burkert 1985:193). The funeral feast usually involved animal sacrifices. This sequence of ceremonies had its origins at least as far back as the Bronze Age, and as far as literary and archaeological evidence admits, the rituals changed little over the entire course of Greek history (Vermeule 1979:21).

As for where the Greeks buried their dead, that, too, varied, depending on the era and on the circumstances of death. Soldiers fallen in war were buried or cremated at the site of battle. In the *Iliad*, for example, the Greek warriors, who were far from home, cremated their fallen dead on the battlefield. The Greeks who died in the battle of Marathon in 490 BC were cremated and then interred in a large burial mound at the site, still visible today. But Greeks who died at home were buried in city cemeteries. Today graveyards can be found inside various neighborhoods in most towns and cities, and from the Bronze Age down to the archaic period burials within Greek communities, including inside the Athenian agora, were relatively common. But by the classical period Greek cemeteries were usually placed just *outside* the city walls, on the roads leading from the cities; 500 BC is the likely date of a ban on burial inside the city walls of Athens (Garland 2001:125). Among other things, although the Greeks did not, in general, understand the concept of contagion, they were nevertheless rightly wary of rotting bodies and believed corpses should be placed out of the way of the living so as not to "pollute" them.

Within the cemeteries, Greek families would commonly have their own plots, often along a little path in the graveyard; many examples of this survive in the Kerameikos. In the family plot individual graves would be marked by tombstones, or stelae, inscribed on which would be the name of the deceased. Depending on the wealth of the family, the stele might be a small, simple rectangular stone or an extremely elaborate monument, complete with bas-relief carvings of the deceased and their servants. To honor the dead, or at least their memory, families regularly tended the tombs of their deceased. This included physical maintenance of the gravesite and tombstone as well as observing the anniversary of death by bringing offerings to the gravesite, such as libations of milk and honey. Overall, this "cult" of the dead – mourning and burial rituals, maintaining the gravesite, and particularly the offerings at the tomb – suggests a belief that the dead were somehow present and active at their graves or under the earth in general, and might somehow watch over the living. More than that, though, visits by relatives to family graves, then as now, would reunite living and dead – ancestors and descendants – allowing the living to show respect for and remembrance of the dead, and allowing the survivors to share their grief and comfort each other.

The ancient Greeks' very strong belief in the necessity of honoring the dead was also reflected in religious customs devoted to the continual appeasement of both those who had already been properly buried and those who had not received the due rites. Although families regularly brought offerings to the graves of relatives on the anniversary of their death, various cities also held community festivals to ensure that the dead would rest in peace and that the living would have peace of mind.

The Athenians, for example, celebrated the Genesia, a general state festival during which they honored the souls of the dead. The Genesia took place on the fifth day of the month of Boedromion (toward the end of our September). The name, which comes from the Greek *gen-* ("race" or "family"), suggests the festival may have originated as way for individual families to reverence deceased ancestors, but the

legendary Athenian lawmaker Solon may have converted it into a national celebration (Parke 1977:53). The Genesia thus may have become an equivalent to the British Remembrance Day or the US Memorial Day, a day on which the state of Athens recognized its debt to the dead, mainly their sacrifice in battle; this would help to explain why the Genesia took place in the fall, at the end of the campaign season, though the Athenians observed the festival not only during war but also during times of peace (Parke 1977:53–4). Not much specific information survives about how the Genesia was celebrated, but the rituals probably included libations to the dead. Apart from cult festivals to worship dead heroes, such as those who died at Marathon, the Genesia appears to have been the only public festival in Athens devoted solely to honoring the dead. Other states probably had similar festivals of the dead, though we have virtually no specific information about any of them (Johnston 1999a:43).

The one-day Genesia, however, was a relatively minor festival for the dead compared to the three-day Anthesteria. This holiday, the name of which derives from the Greek *anthos*, or "flower," was a major festival honoring the god Dionysus, but the last two days, particularly the third day, were devoted to the dead. Unlike the Genesia, during which the Athenians reverenced and remembered their dead, part of the Anthesteria was evidently intended to *appease* the dead and avert any evil they might intend toward the living. The Anthesteria took place on the 11th, 12th, and 13th of the month of Anthesterion (our late February/early March), the time in spring when flowers come into blossom. The festival consisted of three phases: the Pithoigia, the Choes, and the Chytrai. On the Pithoigia, the day of "jar-opening," new wine was tasted and offered to Dionysus (Parke 1977:107–8).

The Choes, or day of "wine-jugs," the main day of the Anthesteria, included a procession and sacrifices in honor of Dionysus, followed by evening parties to which guests brought their own wine (quite different from the usual Greek symposium, at which the host provided the drink). On this second day of Anthesteria, however, the ghosts of the dead were believed to roam the city and stay until they were intentionally driven away by certain rituals at the end of the festival. Because the living and the dead were supposed to remain separate, as the extramural burials suggested, the possibility of contact with the spirits made the last two days of the Anthesteria "unlucky," and to avoid pollution by contact with the dead businesses closed, temples shut down, and people stayed home. For protection against the unseen spirits, the Athenians smeared their doors with pitch (to which the spirits would stick if they tried to enter the house) and chewed hawthorn leaves (which were supposed to have some sort of protective quality, perhaps similar to the alleged power of garlic against vampires).

On the third day of the Anthesteria, the Chytrai, or day of "pots," each family made its own offerings to the dead, cooking a meal of mixed grains in a pot and offering it to chthonic Hermes (Hermes of the underworld) for the sake of the dead. At sunset, the head of the household went through all the rooms shouting, "Out the door [spirits]! Anthesteria is over." In short, the Greek Anthesteria seems to have served a function similar to Halloween, a night when ghosts are believed to wander the earth. If the spirits are not appeased by the ritual offering of food ("treat"), they may cause harm to the living ("trick"). In the case of the Anthesteria, it is not entirely clear how or why the ghosts wandered the earth, or even whose spirits they were, except perhaps for one. On the last day of the Anthesteria a meal was offered to the

ghost of Erigone, a legendary maiden who hanged herself after the death of her father Icarius, to whom Dionysus had given the gift of wine (Burkert 1985:241; Johnston 1999a:219–24).

Chthonic Deities and Denizens of the Underworld

We sometimes refer to the Olympian deities, who generally have no contact with the underworld, as *ouranic*, or "of the sky." These deities' functions involved the upper world and the living. Usually ouranic deities did not venture to Hades, but there were exceptions. Dionysus went to retrieve his mother Semele from the dead, for example (Clark 1979: 99–108). And sometimes Olympians such as Hermes, one of whose roles was to accompany the souls of the dead to Hades, earned the epithet Cthonios, or *chthonic*, "of the earth." Deities whose functions included the earth itself (such as agriculture), or whose functions involved the dead, were considered chthonic. Thus Demeter, too, had a chthonic aspect as a fertility goddess, since seeds are planted in the earth and were seen as representing death and renewal (burial and rebirth), and so she was sometimes referred to as Chthonia. And deities who dwelled in the underworld and rarely ventured outside it are regularly referred to as chthonic. Ceremonies of worship for ouranic and chthonic deities reflected the contrasts of light and dark, living and dead, above and below the earth. Those for ouranic deities were usually performed in daylight on high altars, directed upwards toward the sky, but since chthonic deities were believed to reside in the earth, sacrifices to them were generally performed at night, directed down into the earth. Liquid offerings of milk, blood, or honey were poured into low altars or pits. Also, the animals sacrificed to ouranic deities were usually white, whereas those sacrificed to chthonic deities were black (Burkert 1985:199).

Chthonic deities included Hades himself, Lord of the Underworld, whose main foray above ground was his abduction of Persephone, who became his wife. She, too, is considered chthonic, although she spent part of each year with her mother Demeter and other Olympians. Hades, though he ruled over the souls of the dead underground, did not *cause* death, did not take souls, and was not an equivalent to the Christian Satan: Hades was not a fallen angel, was not evil, and did not lead mortals into sin. Likewise, the eponymous kingdom of Hades was not Hell; it was a Land of the Dead, a place for the souls of the deceased – at least for those of them who had been buried properly. Hades and Persephone ruled over what is, in many accounts, a relatively gloomy place, guarded by monstrous creatures and inhabited by incorporeal souls of the dead.

Hades, unlike the Olympians, had virtually no cult following. There were no grand temples to Hades, no giant cult statues. His only real worship site seems to have been in southern Greece, where the Eleans had built a temple to him, and at Mount Minthe near Elis was a *temenos*, or piece of land set apart as sacred to Hades (Pausanias 6.25.2; Strabo 8.3.14–15). Hades rarely appears as a major character in myths. He was depicted far less in Greek art than his Olympian siblings (Garland 2001:53). Hades was feared more than he was worshiped, because of the Greeks' uncertainty about what death meant, when death would come for each of them, and whether it was final. In other words, they feared what Hades represented. In any case,

the Greeks seemed reluctant to call upon Hades by name and often used a euphemism, Plouton, or, "The Rich One," probably because the fertility of the earth provided men with sustenance, and men preferred to think of Hades in this incarnation, a spirit of the earth's fertility, rather than as a god of the dreaded dead. Hades' main job as ruler of the underworld was to ensure that the dead and living stayed in their appropriate places in the world, i.e. that the living did not enter Hades and the dead did not leave. In the few instances when a living person journeyed to Hades, Persephone helped Hades carry out his function. For example, when Alcestis willingly died in place of her husband, Admetus, Persephone sent her back to the living, believing that she should not have died and did not belong in Hades (Apollodorus, *Library* 1.9.15). In some myths, however, Persephone also facilitates temporary contact between the dead and the living, as in the *Odyssey*, where she sends forth the wives and daughters of noble lords to drink from the pit of blood and speak to Odysseus (11.225–9).

If Hades did not cause death, who did? The Greeks had no agent of death, no major mythological figure equivalent to the Judeo-Christian Angel of Death. The figure of Death himself was not a major character in underworld mythology. Thanatos, Death personified, is rarely mentioned in Greek literature, and when he is his twin brother Hypnos, Sleep, usually accompanies him. Perhaps their most famous appearance is in the *Iliad*, where Zeus orders them to carry the body of his son Sarpedon, slain in battle, home to Lycia (16.667–83). This Thanatos is not a fearful figure but rather swift and gentle. Thanatos also appears as a character in Euripides' *Alcestis* to claim the queen, but in this version of the story Heracles beats Thanatos in a wrestling match and brings Alcestis back to the living. Unlike Death in other world mythologies, Death in Greek myth and religion rarely has an active role and does not kill people or take their souls. Rather, the soul, or *psyche*, envisioned as a small winged creature, departs the body on its own at the moment of death and wings its way to Hades. Thanatos and Hypnos might accompany the soul to Hades, but more often Hermes serves this function in his role of psychopomp, "conductor of souls."

Other cthnonic deities helped Hades keep his kingdom in order. Among these was Hecate, an underworld goddess who, though initially benign (Hesiod, *Theogony* 409–52) became closely associated with restless souls, such as the spirits of people who had died violently rather than dying of natural causes. Hecate was believed to control such souls – to restrain them or let them loose, as circumstances demanded (Johnston 1999a:204–5). Because of this power, Hecate became the patron goddess of magicians and of such sorceresses as Medea, who appealed to her for help with spells. Hecate appeared late at night, fearful to see, accompanied by monstrous dogs and carrying torches to light her way. She was associated with crossroads, liminal locations particularly conducive to magic, and statues and other votive offerings were often left at such places in her honor. Perhaps even more menacing than Hecate were the Erinyes. Born from the earth where drops from the blood of Uranus' castration fell, they were believed to reside beneath the earth (e.g., *Iliad* 19.259–60). The Erinyes, female spirits, punished those who had offended blood kin. The Erinyes most frequently took revenge on children who had murdered their mothers or had committed other crimes against their parents. Their best-known appearance in Greek literature is probably in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, where they hound Orestes for the murder of his mother Clytemnestra until they drive him insane. At least one of the

Erinyes did the same to Alcmeon for killing his mother, Eriphyle (Apollodorus, *Library* 3.7.5).

Ancient Greek conceptions of Hades' kingdom, and the place of these various personnel in it, varied over time and location. Although we commonly refer to the ancient Greek concept of the land of the dead as the "underworld," not all descriptions place Hades literally under the ground. In the earliest recorded account, that in the *Odyssey*, Hades was imagined to be not under the ground but across the ocean, and Odysseus beaches his ship there, heading inland to sacrifice to and make contact with the dead (11.13–22). By the sixth century, however, the realm of Hades was regularly described as underground, and by the fifth century most of the now familiar elements of Hades' kingdom were set. Since Hades' main job was to keep the living and dead in their separate places, the topography of his domain was organized accordingly. The entrance to Hades' underground realm was unknown to mortals, though several grottos in various locations around Greece and southern Italy claimed to be home to the entrance, such as Cape Taenarum in the southern Peloponnese, and Lake Avernus near Naples. As many as five rivers flowed around and through Hades, the river Styx ("Hateful") being the primary current and most often described as the main boundary of Hades, separating the living from the dead. The other rivers included the Acheron ("Woe"); the Cocytus ("Wailing"); the Phlegethon ("Flaming"), a river of flames; and the Lethe ("Forgetfulness" or "Oblivion"). The dead who arrived in Hades and drank from Lethe forgot their former lives and lost their sorrow.

To help ensure that there was a definite and distinct separation between the living and the dead, after souls were accompanied to the boundary of the underworld by Hermes they had to cross the river Styx. The soul's symbolic crossing of water may have represented the crossing from consciousness into unconsciousness, life into death, or at least life into an unknown state. Souls could not cross by themselves, but needed the help of Charon, the boatman who ferried souls across the Styx. Charon was sometimes thought of as a rather monstrous, fearsome creature (possibly because of his Etruscan counterpart, the frightening Charun; Garland 2001:56), but in much of fifth-century Greek art and literature he was depicted simply as an old man somewhat unhappy with his job (e.g., Euripides, *Alcestis* 252–9; Aristophanes, *Frogs* 138–40, 180–269). The crossing was not free; the dead had to pay Charon one obol. Souls that could not pay were forbidden to cross into Hades and left in a kind of limbo. Because of this, the Greeks customarily buried the dead with a coin in their mouths or hands, as described above. Once across the Styx and freed from the no doubt unpleasant company of Charon, souls were confronted by Cerberus, a monstrous dog who guarded the entrance to Hades' kingdom. Hesiod ascribed fifty heads to Cerberus (*Theogony* 312), but later tradition settled on three. Cerberus' job was to help Hades and Persephone prevent unauthorized souls from entering or leaving Hades, though the creature was sometimes surprisingly ineffectual, as on more than one occasion living men managed to infiltrate Hades.

Greek literature as early as Homer included the concept of punishment or honor after death, depending on whether one had offended the gods or led a pious life; that is, your behavior in this life determined your fate in the next life. Thus, once admitted to Hades, the dead had to face judgment. The earliest judge in Hades was Minos (*Odyssey* 11.568). Rhadamanthys, described by Homer as ruler of Elysium (*Odyssey* 4.561), eventually became another judge, and in the fourth century Plato's addition

of Aeacus brought the number of judges to three (*Apology* 41a; *Gorgias* 523e–524a). All were famous during their lives for being lawgivers, and their job was to assign souls to the appropriate places within Hades, deciding whether each soul would be rewarded or punished. Those to be rewarded were assigned to Elysium which, in the earliest Greek literature (Homer and Hesiod), was imagined to be separate from Hades, and was reserved for mortals related to the gods and for heroes who had fought and died gloriously in battles such as the Trojan War. By the fifth century Elysium was described as a part of Hades itself, as a place where the souls of the good were rewarded by leading enjoyable afterlives.

Souls of those who had offended the gods did not enjoy a pleasant afterlife in Hades, however. In Homer's Hades, where most of the dead mingle, such criminals are not confined to a separated location, but they are indeed punished (*Odyssey* 11.572–600). Criminals in Hades were relegated to Tartarus. Hesiod describes Tartarus as being "as far below earth as sky is above the earth" (*Theogony* 720–5), not a particularly helpful description, and the place is used as a prison for the Titans who fought against Zeus. But by the fifth century Tartarus had become a segment of Hades in which famous criminals were punished. Many of them were mortals who had been favored by the gods but then dared to challenge the immortals: one of the greatest offenses possible was for a mortal to exhibit *hubris* toward the gods. Tantalus, partly because he was a son of Zeus, was favored by the gods and often dined with them before being shunned by them. There are several different versions of the crime that landed him in Tartarus. In one, Tantalus abused the gods' hospitality by stealing their nectar and ambrosia. In another, Zeus and other gods told him secrets, which he promptly revealed to other mortals. In the best-known version of Tantalus' crime, though, he exhibited hubris by deciding to test the gods' omniscience in a particularly gruesome manner. He invited them to a feast, cut up his own son, Pelops, and served him up to the gods in a stew. The gods weren't fooled, and refused to eat the horrifying meal – all except Demeter, who inadvertently ate part of Pelops' shoulder, distracted as she was by the loss of her daughter to Hades. Zeus restored Pelops to life, giving him an ivory shoulder to replace the missing one, and punished Tantalus by condemning him to an eternity of perpetual hunger and thirst, mirroring the nature of his crime. In Hades, then, Tantalus stood in a pool of water, but whenever he bent over to drink, the water receded; trees heavy with fruit hung overhead, but whenever he reached for them they moved out of his grasp – a punishment described as early as the *Odyssey* (11.582–92).

Another famous offender undergoing eternal punishment in Hades was Ixion, a mortal king who tried to seduce Hera. Zeus punished him by chaining him to an eternally revolving fiery wheel, which perhaps reflected his burning and uncontrollable lust. Sisyphus, too, was a mortal king, renowned for his cunning. In the most popular version of his crime and punishment, he betrayed Zeus by publicizing one of the god's affairs. The god then condemned Sisyphus to spend eternity trying to push a huge boulder up a hill. Whenever Sisyphus neared the top, the boulder rolled back down, and Sisyphus had to retrieve it and begin again. Women as well as men were punished in Hades for their sins. The Danaïdes, daughters of king Danaüs, killed their husbands on their wedding night. In the afterlife they were condemned to draw water for all eternity, as they were given leaky jars that could never remain filled. Although all the criminals in Hades described here are mythological characters, such stories

reflected, at least in part, the Greek belief that a person was responsible for his (or her) behavior in this life, and that immoral acts did carry a price – if not in this life, then in the next.

Contacting the Dead: *Katabasis* and Necromancy

Although the Greeks did not have a strong Death figure in their religion or mythology, stories of mortal heroes who journeyed to Hades to face death in person appear frequently in ancient Greek literature. When heroes such as Heracles, Theseus, Orpheus, and Odysseus descended to Hades and returned successfully, they achieved a sort of rebirth: they metaphorically died and returned from the dead. This journey to the underworld is known as a *katabasis* – a "descent" by the living into the realm of the dead. A *katabasis* generally entails the hero having to face his own mortal nature, overcome his fear of death, and realize that the best way for a mortal to attain immortality is to achieve a heroic reputation through brave and memorable deeds. As with the criminals in Hades, although the characters in these stories are mythological, their situations serve as models for human behavior – in this case, the attitudes we must take to make our lives, and inevitable deaths, more meaningful. Such an interpretation of these stories does not necessarily contradict a Greek belief in life after death, or in the rewards and punishments that might await us in the afterlife. In some instances, heroes of myth travel to Hades specifically to consult the dead, who have access to information hidden from the living. And the idea that the dead have occult knowledge was exploited by the practice of necromancy, a method of communication with the dead, often for the purpose of divination Although necromancy, like *katabasis*, appears in myths and legends, there is sufficient evidence that it was actually practiced, though not necessarily approved of, in Greek society (Ogden 2001:esp. xviii–xx and 263–8).

Although the hero Heracles wrestles with Thanatos in Euripides' *Alcestis*, his main confrontation with death comes in his twelfth labor, a *katabasis* to capture Cerberus and bring the creature back from Hades. Significantly, before embarking on this quest Heracles went to Eleusis to be initiated into the Mysteries of Demeter; that is, he was assured of some sort of rebirth after death (Clark 1979:79–94). Then he went to the entrance to Hades at Taenarum and headed down. He asked the god for Cerberus and was given permission to take the dog so long as he could capture it without using weapons. Heracles caught the creature with his bare hands, brought it to the upper world, showed it to Eurystheus (who had sent him on his labors) and then returned the dog to Hades (Apollodorus, *Library* 2.5.12), thus metaphorically dying and being reborn not once but twice, an excess typical of Heracles, that most excessive of Greek heroes.

Theseus, unlike his Dorian counterpart Heracles, went to Hades for a less than admirable reason: to help his friend Peirithoüs kidnap Persephone. Greek tradition consistently views this adventure as "an outrageous act of impiety" (Clark 1979:125), and so although the journey is indeed a *katabasis* it hardly serves the typical function of a journey to Hades, that of a hero facing his own mortality and emerging as a wiser, more mature individual. Entering at Taenarum, Theseus and Perithoüs made their way to Hades' palace, whereupon he invited them to eat. Hades was no fool, and

when the friends sat down on the stone chairs, they found that they couldn't get up again: they were bound fast. Theseus escaped only because Heracles, on his quest for Cerberus, pulled Theseus from the chair. Heracles was unable to free Peirithoüs, however (Apollodorus, *Library* 3.16.24). Theseus, despite his transgression, was thus given a second chance at life – and a chance to redeem his reputation.

Orpheus, a renowned musician, went to Hades in an attempt to recover his wife, Eurydice, who had died from a snakebite on their wedding day. Once in the underworld, Orpheus charmed Cerberus with music, and the dog let him pass. The music swayed Hades and Persephone as well, and the two permitted him to take Eurydice back to the land of the living, but only on the condition that he not look back at her on the return to the upper world. Of course he turned to look, to make sure she was safe, and she faded back down to Hades. But because he had faced death and returned to tell about it, Orpheus was believed to have all sorts of arcane knowledge about the nature of death and the afterlife. A series of poems comprising a cosmology and various beliefs about the nature of death and the soul was ascribed (falsely) to Orpheus and has become known as Orphic literature. Orpheus' legendary descent to Hades thus resulted in the actual cult of Orphism, a religion that began as early as the archaic period, and one of the only Greek religions to have a written doctrine.

The heroic journey to Hades that resonates most even today, though, must be that of Odysseus, whose dread at being told by Circe that he must journey to the land of Hades and Persephone is quite palpable, as is that of his crew (*Odyssey* 10.490–502, 566–70). Odysseus must travel to Hades to consult the shade of the seer Teresias, who will tell him how to sail home to Ithaca (and who will also predict the manner of Odysseus' death). This episode, which constitutes Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, is not, technically, a *katabasis*, in the sense that Odysseus' voyage to Hades is not literally a descent, but in all other respects it resembles the traditional *katabasis* of myth (Clark 1979:74–8). Book 11 of the *Odyssey* is generally referred to as the *Nekuia*, a ritual by which ghosts are summoned and interrogated; that is, Odysseus performs what is essentially the earliest Greek necromantic ceremony on record, as he fills a pit with milk, honey, wine, water, and barley, and then slits the throats of a ram and a ewe, offering their blood up to the dead in exchange for answers to his questions. The ceremony "is performed with great dignity and compassion; there seems to be no stigma attached to it" (Luck 1985:167).

Such was not the case in historical times, when necromancy was sometimes frowned upon both as possibly fraudulent but also as potentially harmful to the dead, who wished to rest undisturbed (Luck 1985:167). The living might call up the dead for relatively trivial purposes, as seems to have been the case with Periander, tyrant of Corinth, who sent messengers to the oracle of the dead on the Acheron river in Thesprotia to summon the ghost of Melissa, his wife, in order to ask her the location of some money he could not find. Melissa appeared and said that she would not give up the information, because she was cold and naked, as her clothes had not been burned with her. Periander then forced all the women of Corinth to strip, and burned their clothes in a pit. Melissa's ghost was evidently appeased as, when consulted a second time, she told the messengers where the money was hidden (Herodotus 5.92). The banality of Periander's reason for the necromantic ceremony, and his compensation for Melissa's improper burial, help Herodotus characterize him as an oppressive ruler.

The oracle of the dead at Acheron in Thesprotia was actually one of four main oracles of the dead in antiquity, the other three being Avernus in Campania in Italy, Heracleia Pontica on the south coast of the Black Sea, and Tainaron (Taenarum) in southern Greece. The existence of such oracles and other, lesser, locations for summoning the dead suggests that necromancy was practiced regularly, if not frequently (Ogden 2001:265–6). Along with such sites there existed professional practitioners of necromancy – evocators and so-called sorcerers who would "call forth" the dead; sometimes they were overtly fraudulent, using ventriloquism. Evidently such specialists could be called on by anyone wishing to communicate with the dead, so long as they could afford it (Ogden 2001:95–115).

As Ogden points out, overall "antiquity's moral evaluation of necromancy is particularly difficult to pin down," and may have been considered as good or as bad as the person practicing it. Those who consulted the dead via necromancy were "bold, desperate, or strange to turn to it," as any type of contact with the dead was inherently dangerous and undesirable (2001:263–4). Thus, quite unlike the heroic stories of *katabasis*, which carried with them the hope of spiritual rebirth and attainment of immortality through reputation, necromancy carried with it no glory for those facing the dead. It was one thing to travel yourself to the land of the dead – whether literally or metaphorically – and face your mortality, but quite another to force the dead to come to you.

Contact from the Dead: Hauntings

Whereas *katabasis* involved the living visiting the dead and necromancy forced the dead to come to you, hauntings were (and are) cases of the dead visiting the living of their own accord rather than being summoned by the living through magical means. The dead may return for benign reasons, such as to warn the living of danger, to prophesy, or to comfort the living. In Greek literature and folk-belief, however, most of the dead who return do so for less altruistic reasons. The Greeks and Romans identified three main types of dead whose restless spirits might haunt the living: the *aōroi*, those who had died before their time and whose spirits had to wander until the span of their natural lives was completed; the *biaiothanatoi*, those who had died violently; and the *ataphoi*, the unburied. These categories were not mutually exclusive; a person could certainly be murdered *and* left unburied. The *biaiothanatoi* and the *ataphoi* were considered particularly dangerous and malevolent (Rohde 1925:594–5), and the Greeks had many tales of the vengeful dead.

Plutarch, for example, records a story "told by many people" about how the Spartan Pausanias was haunted by the ghost of a girl named Cleonice, who was from a distinguished family. Pausanias lusted after her, and her parents, fearing to displease him, abandoned her to him. He summoned her to his bedroom, but as she approached the bed she tripped in the dark and Pausanias, startled by the noise and mistaking her for an assassin, stabbed her to death. Her phantom then kept appearing to him in his sleep, accusing him of murder. As the harassment showed no signs of abatement, the exhausted Pausanias went the oracle of the dead at Heracleia Pontica and summoned the spirit of Cleonice, beseeching her to give up her anger against him. She cryptically replied that his troubles would soon end when he came to Sparta,

a reply that hinted at his impending death (*Cimon* 6.4–6). Pausanias was soon after starved to death by the Spartans for allegedly stirring up a helot revolt, and so his spirit, too, was restless and seems to have brought down a curse upon the Spartans, who had to appease him with the offering of two bronze statues (Fontenrose 1978:129–30; Faraone 1991b:184–7).

But from the earliest Greek literature down through Roman times lack of burial was the main motivation in antiquity for the disembodied dead to haunt the living. An unburied body was no longer among the living but had also not yet crossed into Hades, and was caught in a liminal state of unrest. A proper burial usually solved the problem. For example, the ghost of Patroclus, appearing to Achilles in a dream, states that once Achilles holds a funeral for him, he will no longer return from the dead: "For I will not come again out of Hades, when you have granted me the right of funeral fire" (*Iliad* 23.75–6). At *Odyssey* 11.52 the ghost of Odysseus' shipmate Elpenor, who has died unnoticed in a drunken fall from Circe's roof, meets Odysseus just outside of Hades and complains that he cannot enter until his body is buried; when Odysseus returns to Circe's island, one of the first things he does is give Elpenor a proper burial.

Moreover, it was not enough simply to be buried: the burial must have been performed according to certain rituals desired by the deceased or his soul could not rest. For example, after Achilles was shot by Paris, he was cremated and his ashes mixed in an urn with those of Patroclus. Achilles' spirit was still not at rest, however, and when the victorious Greeks were preparing to sail home from Troy his ghost appeared to them and would not let them leave, because they were departing without leaving any offering on his tomb. His ghost then demanded the sacrifice of King Priam's daughter Polyxena, and when the Greeks cut her throat over Achilles' tomb, saturating it with her blood, his ghost was appeased (Euripides, *Troades* 622–33; *Hecabe* 35–582; see also Hughes 1991:60–5).

A story about a haunted house at Athens was circulating in the time of the Roman author Pliny the Younger, who wrote it down in a letter to his friend Sura in AD 102. This is probably the most famous ghost story from antiquity. Its opening is quite effective and, if it were not set in Athens, could easily be set in any town in any era:

> In Athens there was a large and roomy house, but it had a bad reputation and an unhealthy air. Through the silence of the night you could hear the sound of metal clashing and, if you listened more closely, you could make out the clanking of chains, first from far off, then from close by. Soon there appeared a phantom, an old man, emaciated and filthy, with a long beard and unkempt hair. He wore shackles on his legs and chains on his wrists, shaking them as he walked. And so the inhabitants of this house spent many dreadful nights lying awake in fear. Illness and eventually death overtook them through lack of sleep and their increasing dread. For even when the ghost was absent, the memory of that horrible apparition preyed on their minds, and their fear itself lasted longer than the initial cause of that fear. Eventually the house was deserted and condemned to solitude, left entirely to the ghost. But the house was advertised, in case someone unaware of the evil should wish to buy or rent it. (Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 7.27.5–6)

Finally, a philosopher named Athenodorus rents the house and bravely faces the ghost. The ghost beckons to him and he follows it into the courtyard, where

the ghost vanishes. When the townspeople dig up the courtyard on Athenodorus' advice, they find a skeleton entwined with chains. After they give the bones a proper burial, the hauntings cease. This story has many characteristics of an urban legend: it has a real setting, Athens; it takes place in the recent past; and the story is told by a person of some education, i.e. Pliny, who says only that he will tell the story as he heard it, but does not name his source (7.27.4). In this version, someone has been killed on the property and buried secretively, without proper rites. The spirit of the deceased haunts the place until the mortal remains are found and buried according to ritual (Felton 1999:65–73).

Some spirits, however, angry at the lack of funeral ceremony in their honor, take vengeance against the living rather than requesting belated rites. Pausanias tells of a ghost in the town of Temesa who, furious at the lack of a funeral, actually started killing people and had to be appeased. Odysseus is forced ashore at Temesa in southern Italy by a storm, where one of his sailors gets drunk and rapes a local girl. The people of Temesa take vengeance by stoning him to death. Odysseus either doesn't notice or doesn't care (the story of Elpenor does suggest a lack of attention on Odysseus' part as to the fate of his individual crewmen), and sails away without burying the dead man, whose ghost then begins killing the inhabitants of Temesa. They consult the Delphic oracle, who tells them the ghost could be propitiated by dedicating a sanctuary to him and by annually sacrificing a maiden to him. These sacrifices end when the famous boxer Euthymus comes to town. Euthymus falls in love with that year's sacrificial maiden, who promises to marry him if he saves her, so Euthymus waits for the ghost and wins a physical fight with him. The ghost disappears, and Euthymus marries the girl (*Odyssey* 6.6.7–11; also Strabo C255). This ghost evidently has a corporeal component; the story suggests that it is a reanimated corpse, or revenant, since it has the ability to cause physical harm to the living rather than simply haunting them as a spectral appearance.

These myths and local legends involve the ghosts of heroes, and the haunting of Temesa in particular has many folkloric analogs such as the story of Perseus and Andromeda. But many towns around Greece had their own local legends of haunted sites, reflecting popular beliefs in restless spirits. Places where men were killed were often expected to be haunted. Pausanias reported that on the plain of Marathon the sounds of men fighting could be heard at night, as if the battle were still being fought (1.32.4). A spirit known as Taraxippus, or "Horse-Troubling," haunted the racetrack at Olympia, frightening the horses at a certain turn, and another Taraxippus haunted the racetrack at Corinth. The latter was said to be the soul of Glaucus, son of Sisyphus, who had been devoured by his own horses who went mad after losing a chariot race (Pausanias 6.20.19). Whose spirit haunted the horses at Olympia, though, was a source of disagreement. Another haunted site is described by Plutarch, who says that in his native city of Chaeronea in Boeotia a criminal named Damon had been murdered in the public bath, and that even down to Plutarch's own time apparitions appeared at the place and ghostly groanings were heard emanating from the spot, causing the baths to be walled up (*Cimon* 1.6). As with many sites that garnered a bad reputation from crimes committed there, the place was abandoned. Neither Pausanias' nor Plutarch's stories give any indication that purification rituals were performed or offerings given in an attempt to placate the spirits. Rather, the ghosts continued to haunt these places.

It is clear from accounts in myth and folklore that in Greek religion the single most important factor connected to the appearance of ghosts is a death without the proper ceremonies. We need not look far for explanations of the emphasis placed on burial in ancient Greece and other societies around the world, including our own. Burial ceremonies help the living sever emotional ties with the recently deceased, and the rite of passage involved in death, burial, and the rituals accompanying it brings a sense of finality for the living. The rituals also provide a way to symbolically join the dead person to all those who have gone to the afterlife before; in other words, the rituals provide a transition for both the living *and* the dead. The separation of living and dead remains paramount, its importance emphasized by the development of extra-mural burial. Attempts by the living to interact with the dead, and by the dead to interact with the living, are momentary and ephemeral, as reflected in various Greek myths and legends. Stories of *katabasis*, necromancy, and hauntings all illustrate problems with disturbing the boundary between life and death. Heracles brings Cerberus up to the land of the living, but the creature has no place in that realm, so Heracles returns it to Hades. Theseus descends to Hades, but barely returns to earth – without Peirithoüs. Orpheus tries to bring Eurydice back to life, but fails. Odysseus, after the dead gather to drink the blood sacrifice, tries to embrace his mother's ghost, but cannot. Restless spirits must be dealt with by proper rituals or by abandonment of the haunted property. Although the Greeks' beliefs about survival after death varied, their beliefs about the necessity of keeping the living and the dead separate were surprisingly consistent.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For the ancient conceptualization of death and the underworld in general Rohde 1925 remains indispensable; see also Vermeule 1979, Hopkins 1983 and Richardson 1985. For Greek burial customs and festivals see Kurtz and Boardman 1971, Parke 1977, and Garland 2001. For the underworld gods and other underworld personnel, see Burkert 1985 and Garland 2001. For katabasis see Clark 1979. For restless spirits and the trouble they could cause, see Luck 1985, Faraone 1991b, and Johnston 1999a. For human sacrifice to appease spirits, see Hughes 1991. For necromancy see Ogden 2001. For ancient ghost stories, with particular attention to their comparative and folkloric context, see Felton 1999.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I thank David M. Johnson for his comments on and criticisms of this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Heroes and Hero-Cults

Gunnel Ekroth

What Is a Hero?

Name a hero and Achilles, Agamemnon, and Heracles immediately spring to mind. These characters are the household names, so to speak, among the heroes, and we are well informed about both their spectacular lives and their deaths from epic and myth, and of the sanctuaries and shrines where they received cult. But what about Egretes, the Children of Caphyae, and the "Heroes in the Field"? They were also heroes and, though less well known to us, certainly no less important to the people who worshiped them. And what do we make of the figure or figures who for more than a hundred years received offerings of pottery, figurines, and metal objects from the rural inhabitants of Berbati in the Argolid, when they feasted next to the monumental Mycenaean tomb in the midst of their valley? This may also be a hero-cult, though we can neither name its recipient nor define his (or her) character.

Heroes (*hērōes*, fem. *hērōinai*, *hērōissai*) are a category of divine beings of Greek mythology and religion which are difficult to define, since they varied over both time and place. To quote a now classic statement by Nicholas Coldstream: "Greek hero-worship has always been a rather untidy subject, where any general statement is apt to provoke suspicion" (Coldstream 1976:8). A characteristic of heroes and hero-cults is their heterogeneity, both in relation to the nature of the heroes themselves and the appearance of their cult-places, and, to a lesser extent, the cult practices. Their importance in the Greek religious system is, on the other hand, indisputable, not the least from the fact that they were worshiped all over the Greek territory from the late eighth century BC to the end of antiquity.

For the ancient Greeks there was no clear-cut definition of a hero; still, heroes were distinguished from gods and from the ordinary dead. How *we* perceive a hero and his cult is dependent on which kind of evidence we consider. A hero can be defined as a person who had lived and died, either in myth or in real life, this being the main distinction between a god and a hero. He was thus dead and may have had a tomb,

which sometimes was the focus of a cult, though not all heroes received religious attention. The difference between a hero and an ordinary dead person lies in the relationship with the living, the ordinary dead having some kind of connection with those tending the grave and presenting offerings, while the heroes were worshiped on a more official level. Finally, the hero was generally a local phenomenon and most heroes were connected with one specific location.

The use and meaning of the term hērōs

The written sources provide us with accounts of myths and cults of heroes, but the designation *hērōs* is not always a distinct marker of the status of the figure described in this manner or of the extent to which he received any form of cult.

The etymology of the term is unclear. A connection with Hera has been suggested, the *hērōs* being seen as the young divine consort of the goddess in her aspect as a goddess of marriage or of the seasons (Hall 2004; Pötscher 1961; cf. Adams 1987). A Linear B tablet from Pylos (PY Tn 316) mentions a *Tiriseroe* which may refer to a divinity, but it is difficult to know whether the Mycenaean *hērōs* constituted an equivalent to the hero of later periods (Gérard-Rousseau 1968:222–4).

Homer uses *hērōes* for the human protagonists of his epics, not only the warriors but also the bard Demodocus and even the people of Ithaca at large, but not for a recipient of cult in the same sense as in the archaic and classical periods. In Hesiod's *Work and Days* (157–68), the Heroes constitute one of the four races, which came before the present Iron Race of men. After Gold, Silver and Bronze, the Heroes were created, "a god-like race of hero-men who are called demi-gods"; they fought at Thebes and Troy and perished there, apart from a lucky few who continued their lives on the islands of the blessed.

From the archaic period, *hērōs* is used not only for a figure of extrahuman status, a protagonist of myth and epic, but also for a divine figure receiving cult. The terminology is not unambiguous, however, and an individual who fulfilled the criteria for being a hero could sometimes be called a god (*theos*), as was the case with the athlete Theogenes, worshiped on Thasos (Pausanias 6.11.2–9), or the healing divinity Hērōs Iatros from Athens, designated as *theos* in a third-century inscription (*IG* ii^2 839). *Hērōs* seems in this case to have functioned more as a name or a title. The disparity between terminology and content is evident also for the heroines. Though the concept of a female equivalent of *hērōs* exists in Homer, the earliest use of a term for a heroine (*hērōis*) is found in Pindar (*Pythian* 11.7; Lyons 1997: 7–11).

But the fluid use of *hērōs* can reflect the character of the figure in question as well, Heracles being the prime case (Lévêque and Verbanck-Piérard 1992). Born a mortal, he burnt himself to death on Mount Oite and finally ascended to the gods on Olympus. He was worshiped all over Greek territory but there was no tradition of him having a tomb. Heracles was primarily perceived as a god, though of mortal descent, a status pinpointed when Pindar describes him as a *hērōs theos* (*Nemean* 3.22). Also the Dioscuri and Asclepius transgressed the category of heroes with the panhellenic spread of their cults and their mythical background presenting them as partly immortal.

In the hellenistic period, some tombstones for the ordinary dead begin to carry the word "hero" or "heroine." These are frequently decorated with heroic motifs, such

as banqueting scenes and riders, and, where the age of the departed is known, they were often children or adolescents, whose untimely death may have led to them being heroized (Graf 1985:128–35). Instead of taking *hērōs* to have meant simply "dead man" and as a sign of the devaluation of hero-cults after the classical period, it seems that these individuals were in some way considered as special and distinct from the ordinary dead.

The rise of the hero concept

The earliest traces of hero-cults depend on which kind of sources are considered and it is not obvious that the written and archaeological evidence for heroes and hero-cults coincided from the beginning. Tendencies of hero-worship may be distinguished in Homer (Hadzisteliou-Price 1973), such as the tomb of Ilios being a respected landmark (*Iliad* 10.414, 11.166, 371, 24.350) and bulls and rams being sacrificed by the Athenian youths to Erechtheus (*Iliad* 2.550–1). The basic features of the Hesiodic heroes, that they are mortal but still semi-divine, is in accordance with the concept of heroes as we know it from later periods and it is possible that these heroes (as well as the races which preceded them) were thought to correspond to the heroes of the kind later receiving cult (Antonaccio 1994:405–9; Nagy 1979:151–73; West 1978:370–3).

Even though our earliest written sources do not use *hērōs* in the same sense as in later periods, or refer to hero-cults directly, the archaeological evidence indicates that hero-cults existed in some form in the late Early Iron Age. From the eighth century, there is a small and scattered group of hero shrines, all connected with epic or mythic heroes, identified by inscribed dedications (in most cases postdating the installation of the cult): Helen and Menelaus at Sparta, Odysseus in the Polis cave on Ithaca, and Agamemnon at Mycenae (Catling and Cavanagh 1976; Malkin 1998:94–199; Cook 1953). A *hērōon* dedicated to the heroes who participated in the expedition against Thebes was established in Argos in the early sixth century (Pariente 1992).

Traces of Iron Age activity are found at Mycenaean tholos and chamber tombs over most of the Greek mainland in the eighth century, though some instances date back to the tenth century BC (Antonaccio 1995; Boehringer 2001; Coldstream 1976). Some deposits, rich in content and spanning several centuries, were probably hero-cults (as at Menidi in Attica and Berbati in the Argolid), while offerings of a more simple nature suggest "tomb cult" directed towards the recently dead or to ancestors. A recent finding at a tholos tomb in Thessaly of an inscribed tile (seventh or sixth century BC) dedicated to Aeatus, the mythical founder of the region, shows that the heroes worshiped at the Bronze Age tombs may have been identified with mythic and epic figures as well (Intzesiloglou 2002).

Veneration of the recently dead also developed into hero-cults. Some individuals were buried in a manner clearly exceeding the regular norm, such as the couple interred in the tenth-century monumental house at Lefkandi, though at this site there is no sign of a subsequent cult. In Eretria, a group of people – men and women – were given rich cremation burials near the West Gate in the late eighth to the early seventh century (Bérard 1970). A triangular precinct was constructed around 680 BC and a building functioning as a shrine or a dining room was later erected next to it, the cult-place being in use until the late classical period, most likely as a hero-cult.

Another early category of hero to consider is the oikist, the leader of the party setting out to found a new colony outside the Greek homeland (Malkin 1987). The oikist was chosen by the oracle at Delphi and after his death buried in the agora of the new colony and there received a cult. Considering the early institution of some of these cults, as early as the mid-eighth century BC, it is possible that they influenced or even gave rise to hero-cults in the motherland.

Why did hero-cults arise in the eighth century? The spread of the Homeric epics (and Hesiod's writings) may have stimulated the identification of the Mycenaean tombs as those of the Homeric heroes, though a number of later-attested heroes do not figure in Homer. The occurrence of hero-cults is contemporary with the rise of the city-state, and hero-cults can be seen as a response to political and social changes. It has been suggested that they were mechanisms for aristocrats and prominent families to assert themselves or attempts by individual landholders and smaller communities to claim rights to land and territory. On the whole, the origins of hero-cults must be viewed as highly diverse. Certain hero-cults may be derived from an interest in ancient graves or the tending of the graves of important contemporary individuals, while the heroes of myth and epic inspired others. To attempt to single out *the* factor that gave rise to hero-cults seems to be a futile endeavor. A more fruitful approach is to focus on the development of the category of heroes, a heading under which a whole range of figures with diverse origins came to be included, as well as on the political, social, and religious changes which contributed to this process (Parker 1996: 39).

Though the earliest traces of heroes and hero-cults date back to the Early Iron Age, heroes and hero-cults in the full sense of the terms did not become a prominent feature of Greek religion until the archaic period. Furthermore, different hero-cults came into being (and also disappeared) continuously all through the archaic, classical, and hellenistic periods, and the Bronze Age tombs even became the focus of religious attention a second time, in the late classical and hellenistic periods (Alcock 1991).

How To Become a Hero: Myth vs. Cult

Attempts have been made to make sense of the plethora of Greek heroes by dividing them into categories or by focusing on one particular category (Farnell 1921; Pfister 1909–12). Such groupings seem to have been of little importance in antiquity and most regions housed a variety of heroes cutting across these groups (Brelich 1958).

Many heroes (and heroines) are found in myth, epic, and other narratives (including iconography), but there are also a large number solely known from cultic contexts and for whom we have no biographical details. Similarly, there is an intricate relationship between stories told about heroes and heroines and actual hero-cults. Myth may reflect cult practices but also be about the same rituals or about cult-places, or aim to place them in a heroic context. Though the bulk of all heroes who have come down to us in any kind of media have no attested cults, this is in many cases probably just due to lack of evidence. Every hero seems to have been a potential candidate for worship in some form.

The heroes of myth and epic were a mixed bunch, who performed extraordinary deeds and were claimed as founders of cities and sanctuaries, inventors and ancestors

of families. Most of these heroes are male warriors or kings, giving rise to our modern use of "hero" and "heroic." But myth and epic also contain a number of female figures. These heroines often occur in a familial context, as the less influential part of a heroic couple, or as virgins who give their lives to save their city, family, or husband (Larson 1995; Lyons 1997). A perhaps more surprising group of heroes is those who are children or even babies, as in the case of the infant Opheltes/Archemorus, who was killed (or even partly eaten) by a snake when he was put down on the grass near a spring at Nemea (Pache 2004:95–134).

Some heroes and heroines may originally have been gods or goddesses who did not fit in and were eventually subordinated among the heroes or merged with a heroic figure. At Sparta, Alexandra-Cassandra, worshiped in a shrine together with Zeus-Agamemnon, and Helen, sharing her cult with Menelaus, were both originally local goddesses who later became identified with well-known epic characters. Similarly Erechtheus' and Hippolytus' close relationships with goddesses suggest that they also had been gods once.

The heroes known only from cultic contexts, as recipients of either sacrifices or dedications, demonstrate a great diversity. The Attic evidence is particularly rich, and many of the heroes mentioned in sacred laws or regulations dealing with state, deme, or private cultic matters are clearly local cultic figures who must have been incomprehensible outside their regional context. Some cultic heroes had a specialized function, evident from their name, such as, for example, the Hērōs Klaikophoros, presumably "The Holder of the Temple Keys," attested in Epidaurus, Troezen, and Messene in the hellenistic period (*IG* iv 768 and 1300; v 1, 1447; *SEG* 15.210). Others demonstrate a strong topographical link, such as the "Heroes in the Field" or the "Hero at Antisara" (*LS* 2 C, 6–10; *LSS* 14, 84). There are even anonymous heroes and heroines evidenced both in the Athenian sacrificial calendars and from dedications from all over Greece. These figures must have been known by the people worshiping them, though perhaps never named.

A number of Greek heroes and heroines were historical or quasi-historical figures: founders of cities, soldiers killed in battle, former enemies, athletes, poets, writers, and other famous and exceptional individuals. For the figures of myth and epic, the reason for them being considered as suitable recipients of cult is self-evident. Historical figures being elevated to heroes is a different matter, since they had to distinguish themselves from the ordinary dead of the same period.

Having been extreme in some sense, in life or death, was the primary reason for heroic status. Poets, such as Homer and Archilochus, and the tragedians, and athletes, such as Theogenes from Thasos, as well as Hippocrates, the father of medicine, all reached hero status owing to their extraordinary achievements and contributions when alive. The first inventor of an action or an item, *prōtos heuretēs*, was often heroized, though many of these heroes were not actual historical figures.

Interestingly, a great number of extreme characters that became heroes had been far from benevolent when alive. This is an important distinction between heroes and Christian saints, who were given their status as a result of their good deeds and with whom the Greek heroes are often compared. A good example of extreme behavior leading to hero status is the case of the athlete Cleomedes from Astypalaea, who killed his opponent in pankration at Olympia and was disqualified (Pausanias 6.9.8–9). Consumed with rage, he tore down the roof of a school building in his home

town, killing sixty innocent children. He barely escaped being lynched and took refuge in a stone chest in a sanctuary and then miraculously disappeared. The Pythia declared him a hero, since he was no longer mortal. Another figure, Tereus, raped his sister-in-law and cut out her tongue to prevent her from telling. After being served his own son Itys for dinner as a punishment, he eventually committed suicide and was buried in Megara, where he received annual sacrifices (Pausanias 1.41.9, 10.4.6).

An extreme death, to be killed in a violent manner and at a young age, was a strong contributory cause for heroization. Many mythic and epic heroes and heroines perished violently at a young age. Among historical figures becoming heroes, a prime example of the time and manner of death being crucial is the case of the war dead, the soldiers fallen in battle. This development is linked to the rise of the hoplite armies of the archaic period, referred to in the poetry of Tyrtaeus at Sparta but also in a sixth-century epigram from a burial at Ambracia (*SEG* 41.540). In the classical period, the importance of these men, especially at Athens, is evidenced by the *epitaphioi logoi*, the official praise of the fallen, and by their burial place, the Dēmosion Sēma, but a *polyandrion* of the war dead has also been investigated at Thespiae (Schilardi 1977). The soldiers killed at Marathon and buried on the battlefield were venerated as heroes more than 350 years after their deaths (*IG* ii^2 1006, 26 and 69).

Heroes were perceived as being able to help, perhaps even to a greater extent than a god, considering that heroes were thought to have once walked the earth and led some kind of "human" existence, as well as to be more intimately connected with specific locations. In times of threat or crisis, heroes were approached as helpers or acted as such of their own accord, and there are numerous reports of heroes appearing, especially to participate in battle. At the battle of Marathon in 490 BC, Theseus, Heracles, and Marathon (the eponymous hero of the region) were reported to have fought for the Greeks, but so too was Echetlaeus, a figure dressed as a peasant and killing Persians with a plough (Pausanias 1.32.4; Jameson 1951). Such sightings often led to the institution of a cult.

The importance of heroes as helpers, particularly in war, is also evident from the stories stipulating that certain hero-cults or hero-tombs must remain secret and hidden from the enemy. A fragment of Euripides' *Erechtheus* (fragment 370, lines 77–89 *TrGF*), provides a good case. Here, Athena instructs the widow Praxithea (and all of the Athenians for that matter) that the couple's daughters, who gave their lives to save the city, are to receive sacrifices from the Athenians prior to battle, while their *abaton* must be guarded from the attempts by the enemy to sacrifice there to assure military success.

But not all heroes by any means were kindly disposed, and a cult could be instituted or sacrifices performed not only to procure their help but also to appease their anger. There is a strand of danger and threat discernible in certain hero-accounts already in the fifth century and a fragment of Aristophanes describes the heroes as guardians of both evil and well-being (Aristophanes, *Heroes* fr. 322 K-A). Some heroes are said to be directly harmful and dangerous, such as the hero Orestes, and they could even be viewed as senders of diseases (Hippocrates, *Sacred Disease* [vol. 6, 362 Littré]). The dangerous aspect of certain heroes and its consequent effects on the living can be explained with reference to the fact that they belong to the categories of the *ahōroi* and the *biaiothanatoi*, those that had died too early and in a violent way. These groups included persons who had been murdered, executed, died of plague, or committed suicide, but also young people, such as children and virgins. They were

angered and vengeful and needed to be propitiated, but this condition was also the source of their power, making them stronger than the ordinary dead.

The institution of a hero-cult was often a means for solving some kind of crisis, usually related to someone having been wronged or even violently killed. The Children of Caphyae, mentioned above, pretended to hang a statue of Artemis and were stoned to death by the city's enraged population (Pausanias 8.23.7). The local women then began having miscarriages until the Pythia ordered the children to be buried and to be given sacrifices, since they had died unjustly. This story contains elements which can be found in the creation of a number of hero-cults, especially those of athletes and enemies: first, violent death and deprivation of burial resulting in negative effects for society, and secondly, the seeking of help from an oracle, especially Delphi, which remedies the situation by ordering the institution of a cult (Bohringer 1979; Fontenrose 1968; Visser 1982). The wronged hero, once the bitter enemy or a hostile ghost, eventually becomes a defender and protector.

Ritual: Consumption or Destruction

Our view of the sacrificial rituals of hero-cults has in the last decade undergone substantial changes. The traditional notion of hero-sacrifices consisting of holocausts on low hearth-altars, libations of blood in pits, and the offering of prepared meals, but never including ritual dining, needs to be fundamentally revised. This view of hero-cult ritual has been based on an uncritical use of literary sources of different date and character, and on the assumption that information derived from Roman or even Byzantine writers is valid also for conditions during earlier periods. If a broader range of evidence is considered (literary and epigraphical sources, iconography and archaeology) and a focus is maintained primarily upon contemporary sources, the sacrificial rituals of hero-cults in the archaic to hellenistic periods turn out to be very similar to those of the gods (Ekroth 1999, 2002; Nock 1944; Verbanck-Piérard 2000).

The main ritual in hero-cult was an animal sacrifice at which the worshipers ate the meat. The terminology used for these sacrifices was *thyein* and *thysia*, standard terms in the cult of the gods. There is literary, epigraphical, and archaeological evidence for the handling and division of the meat and dining facilities in the sanctuaries of heroes, and direct references to eating. For example, a mid-fifth-century Athenian decree of the cult association of the Hero Echelos and his Heroines states how the meat of the victims sacrificed, a piglet and two fully grown animals, probably sheep, was to be distributed (*LSS* 20; Ferguson 1944:73–9). Present members of the association were to receive a full portion, while the their sons, wives, and daughters seem to have been given at least half a portion of meat each.

Also, the terminology relating to and the appearance of the altars or sacrificial installations used in hero-cults show few differences from those used in the cult of the gods. The altar is called *bōmos*, while the term *eschara*, commonly taken to mean a particular hero-altar, was applied to the upper part of the *bōmos* where the fire was kept, often manufactured in a different material (Ekroth 2001). In hero-cults, *eschara* could also refer to a simple ash altar located directly on the ground, a feature known from the Archegesion on Delos, but the sacrifices were of the alimentary kind (Bruneau 1970:424–6; Ekroth 1998:120–1).

Apart from regular animal sacrifices, the heroes also received *theoxenia*, offerings of food of the kind eaten by humans. This ritual could simply consist of a table with offerings, *trapeza*, and would then be a less expensive, vegetarian alternative to animal sacrifice, especially in private contexts. In official cult, this ritual often functioned as a means of substantiating a *thysia*, either by giving the same recipient both an animal victim and a table or, in the case of a hero and a heroine, giving the former the animal, while the less important heroine received the table (*SEG* 33.147). A large number of reliefs (so-called *Totenmahl* reliefs) show a hero reclining at a table with offerings, while worshipers approach, sometimes bringing an animal as well. Heracles and the Dioscuri were commonly depicted as banqueters, a scheme certainly reflecting the particular importance of *theoxenia* in their cults (Thönges-Stringaris 1965; Verbanck-Piérard 1992). The aim of the *theoxenia* seems to have been to bring the recipient closer to the worshipers, and the ritual could also include the preparation of a couch and an invitation to the hero to come and participate as an honored guest. That a closer bond was desired at private sacrifices is understandable, but the presence of a Hēroxeinia festival on Thasos (*LSS* 68) shows that state cults of heroes focused on such rituals as well.

On the whole, the rituals traditionally considered as typical for heroes, and as distinguishing them from the gods in general, must be considered as marginal features in hero-cults. Blood was of relatively minor importance, and at standard animal sacrifices to heroes the blood was kept and eaten, just as the meat was. At a small number of sacrifices the ritual was modified, with the blood being completely discarded, an action designated by a particular terminology denoting the technical aspects of this procedure. The sacrifices to Pelops at Olympia, as outlined by Pindar (*Olympian* 1.90–3; Slater 1989), consisted of a *thysia* sacrifice embellished with a laden table and couch, but the ritual was initiated by a pouring out of blood, *haimakouria*, presumably over the hero's tomb or into a pit, *bothros*. The blood seems here to have functioned as a means of contacting and inviting the hero and ensuring his presence at the sacrifice.

Most heroes for whom such libations of blood are attested have a particular connection with war, and the ritual may have served both to underline this association and as a reminder of the bloodshed of battle and the battle-line *sphagia* sacrifices, at which the victim's throat was slit and the blood flowed freely. On Thasos, the war dead, called Agathoi, "the good men," were honored with a public funeral, sacrifices, and an official listing of their names (*LSS* 64, 7–22). The inscription gives the term *entemnein* for the ritual action, which in context is best understood to refer to the animal being killed and bled, the blood perhaps being poured on the tomb of the Agathoi, while the meat was eaten at a banquet in which the relatives of the fallen occupied a prominent position. A similar procedure can be reconstructed from Thucydides' account of the rituals for the Spartan general Brasidas, who fell while defending Amphipolis against the Athenians (Thucydides 5.11). He was buried in the city, proclaimed its new founder, and venerated as a hero with games and sacrifices, which included libations of blood and public consumption of the meat.

Destruction sacrifices, at which no dining took place, were rare in hero-cults. Some of these rituals are covered by the terminology used in the cult of the dead (*enagizein*), and the use of this terminology seems to imply not only the burning of the offerings, but also an emphasis of the dead and therefore impure character of these

particular heroes. Heracles received *thysia* sacrifices, at which the meat was eaten, and *enagizein* sacrifices, a combination meant to bring out his dual character as both an immortal god and a mortal hero (Herodotus 2.44; Verbanck-Piérard 1989). In all, however, the complete or partial destruction of the animal victim was no more common in hero-cults than in the cults of the gods, most instances, in fact, being found in the cult of Zeus (Ekroth 2002:217–28; *LS* 151 A, 32–4; *SEG* 33.147.13–15). Many destruction sacrifices, no matter who the recipient, were performed in a crisis context, in which this extraordinary ritual was aimed at solving the problems.

A particular heroic trait was to destroy a ninth part of the victim (or rather of its meat). The sacred law from Selinous mentions a sacrifice to the impure Tritopatores "as to the heroes" and prescribes that a ninth of the meat was to be burnt (Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993: A9–12; Scullion 2000). A sacrificial calendar from Mykonos from around 200 BC also stipulates such a sacrifice (*enateuein*) to Semele (*LS* 96, 23–4), and the ritual was also known, but perhaps not executed, on Thasos in the cult of Heracles (*LSS* 63; *IG* xii suppl. 353; Bergquist 2005).

That the heroes were important recipients of worship is obvious from the actual number of sacrifices they received and the amount of money spent on these occasions. It comes as no surprise that alimentary sacrifice was the main ritual of hero-cults, considering the fact that heroes fulfilled the same role as gods within the Greek religious system. The four best-preserved sacrificial calendars from classical Attica illustrate this point clearly (Ekroth 2002:150–69). Of the 170 or so sacrifices listed in these texts, 40 percent were performed to heroes, while the amounts of money spent on the victims for these sacrifices was around 38 percent of the budget. If the meat from all the animals sacrificed to heroes had been considered unfit for consumption, more than a third of animals slaughtered would not have been eaten. Such a waste of meat seems highly implausible, considering the vital role sacrifices and distribution of meat fulfilled in ancient Greek society, both as a means of strengthening the social ties between citizens and as an indicator of who belonged and who did not, and considering also the fact that virtually all meat eaten seems to have come from animals killed in a ritual context.

Cult-Places

The cult-place of a hero could be called by a variety of terms (Kearns 1992:65–7; Larson 1995:9–13). Some emphasize the fact that the hero was dead: *sēma*, *mnēma*, *thēkē*, and *taphos* are all terms used for regular burials as well as heroic tombs. *Hērōon* refers to a cult-place with a tomb, but the term seems to denote something more elaborate than just a simple burial. The lack of a burial could be noted, as when Pausanias states that the sacrifices to Myrtilus at Olympia took place at an empty mound, *kenon ērion* (6.10.17). Terms used for the sanctuaries of the gods are found as well, such as *temenos* and *hieron* (a holy place or precinct), *naos* (temple), or *alsos* (sacred grove).

The diversity in terminology corresponds to the variations in appearance of archaeologically attested cult-places of heroes (Abramson 1978; Pariente 1992). The identification of a cult-place of a hero or heroine is no simple matter, and without

any written evidence it is often difficult to distinguish a cult-place for a hero from that of a minor god or, in later periods, from a substantial burial monument for an ordinary dead person. Most archaeologically attested hero-cults have either been identified by epigraphical evidence found at the site or by being connected with a hero-cult mentioned in literary sources (Pausanias' account of Greece refers to more than a hundred heroes having some kind of physical monument). On archaeological grounds alone, the means for recognizing a hero-shrine are more ambiguous. A location on or at graves makes the identification plausible, if it can be demonstrated that the burials were in fact known when the cult was established. But a number of hero-shrines show no association with burials at all and it is also clear from the written evidence that the tomb of the hero was no prerequisite for the installation of the cult.

To single out certain kinds of votives as particularly "heroic" is difficult (Hägg 1987). Some types of figurines, such as horses and riders, or pottery shapes, such as kraters, drinking cups or large bowls for the bath of the hero, or objects, such as miniature shields, have been claimed to be typical for hero-cults. A closer comparison with local votive practices often shows that the same objects were dedicated to the gods or used as funerary gifts as well. One category of votive offering which can be said to be particularly linked to hero-cults, though their appearance often exhibits local traits, are stone reliefs or terracotta plaques showing a horseman, a seated male figure or a male–female couple, or a reclining and banqueting figure, often accompanied by a snake (Salapata 1993, 1997; van Straten 1995:92–100).

Just like the cult-places of the gods, hero-shrines could be located anywhere: isolated in the countryside, along roads, at city gates, or on the agora, the location often evoking the hero's role as a founder or protector of the community. A number of hero-cults had a relationship with a divine cult and most, if not all, major sanctuaries of gods housed both burials and cults of heroes. These heroes were often intimately connected with the mythical history of the sanctuary: the hero or heroine founded the sanctuary, instituted the cult, and was its first priest or priestess. The performance of games was also linked to the presence of a hero in a divine sanctuary. At Olympia, Pelops' defeat of Oenomaus was said to have been commemorated by the institution of the games or, according to another tradition, the games were founded by Heracles in honor of Pelops himself.

The tomb of a hero in a sanctuary gave rise to a myth explaining its presence. At Delphi there were different accounts of why Neoptolemus was slain at the altar of Apollo and buried within the sacred area: Pausanias (10.24.6) pointed out the *peribolos* with the hero's tomb near the temple of Apollo. The fact that no convincing match has been made so far with the excavated remains illustrates the difficulties in identifying a hero-shrine.

Written and archaeological evidence makes it clear that many installations connected with heroes consisted only of a tomb, a statue, or a stele, but by no means were all such monuments the focus for sacrifices. The accidental discovery of a prehistoric burial may have called for a one-off sacrifice and dedication of votives, presumably to appease the disturbed hero, but it did not give rise to a recurrent cult. There was also a tradition of some heroes not wanting any cult, as was the case with Eurystheus, who was going to protect Athens from his grave on the condition that the Athenians did not offer him sacrifices and libations (Euripides, *Heraclidae* 1026–36, 1040–3).

The heroes were local phenomena, and the layout of the cult-place was adapted to local conditions and traditions. These circumstances, as well as the heterogeneity of the hero population, account for the lack of panhellenic conformity in the appearance of the cult-places. The layout of cult-places ranged from the simplest and smallest, some only a piece of land marked by a boundary stone (*horos*), to large and elaborate sanctuaries. The sacred area could be an *abaton*, somewhere it was not permitted to enter, and any votives were offered by dropping them over the walls, as at the so-called Leokorion in the Athenian agora (Thompson 1978) and a number of small precincts on Delos. Many hero-cults consisted of small enclosures, in which only an offering table or altar was placed, as in the case of the Stele shrine and the Crossroads *hērōon* at Corinth (Williams 1981: 410–12) or that of the Amyneion at Athens, which also had a well and perhaps a simple stoa (Travlos 1971:76–8).

Some were unique in appearance, as in the case of the Menelaion at Sparta, which consisted of a massive, rectangular platform, almost 15 × 20 m and at least 5 m high. It was accessed by a ramp, and on top there may have been an altar, statues, or a small temple. Finally, there were hero sanctuaries with a temple, like that of a god, and auxiliary buildings, such as the Amphiareion at Oropus, the sanctuary of Hippolytus at Troezen, and the Herakleion on Thasos. The sanctuary of Hērōs Ptoios in Boeotia had at least two altars, a small temple, probably housing the cult statue, and a stoa where the worshipers could dine and sleep, and in which votive objects were kept (Schachter 1981–94:3.11–21). The importance of this sanctuary is also evident from two rows of inscribed stone columns, from the late sixth to the mid-fifth century, supporting monumental tripods.

A fundamental trait of a hero was the fact that he was dead, but the relationship between the tomb of the hero and the location and appearance of the cult-place is complex. Some cult-places emphasized the burial aspect, as in the case of the archaic enclosure of the Pelopion at Olympia, which was centered on a prehistoric tumulus, identified as the tomb of the hero (Kyrieleis 2002), or in that of the precinct of Opheltes at Nemea, in which a mound was artificially created in the sixth century (Miller 2002). Others show no traces of a tomb or burial, and some heroes had cults even though the mythic narrative makes it clear that there were no physical remains, since the hero had vanished at the moment of death. While the tomb of an ordinary dead person constituted a source of pollution, the burials of heroes were an exception to this rule and could be placed in spaces reserved for the living or for the gods, areas from which the dead were otherwise banned. However, religious personnel sometimes had to take certain precautions. Two third-century BC inscriptions from Cos stipulate that the priestesses of Demeter, in order to keep their purity, should not step upon or eat by a *hērōon* (*LS* 154 A, 21–2 and 37; 156 A, 8–10, heavily restored). Pausanias remarks that anyone who ate from the sacrifices to Pelops at Olympia could not enter the temple of Zeus (5.13.3). Presumably participation in the cult of this hero made the worshiper impure in the eyes of the god.

In several cases the bones of heroes are described as gigantic, in accordance with the notion of heroes being men larger than life. The finding of prehistoric bones may have lain behind some stories, and discoveries of this sort could also give rise to cults. The display of actual heroic bones seems, on the other hand, to have been less important for the cult than the fact that a city or sanctuary possessed them and that they were kept at a particular location. In contrast to the relics of Christian saints,

individual bones did not contain the power of the hero (unless the rest of the skeleton was missing, as in the case of Pelops' shoulder blade, kept at Olympia), and there is no tradition of the bones being used to perform miracles or healing, or of them being dangerous. Other possessions of heroes were also displayed in sanctuaries and revered, though rarely in the same cultic sense as the bones (Pfister 1909–12:331–9). Among such venerable objects were spears, shields, and other items of weaponry, but also chariots, ships, furniture, and clothing, and the egg of Leda was even reported to have been kept in the sanctuary of the Leucippides at Sparta.

Public and Private Perspectives

Just like the gods, heroes appealed to all levels of Greek society. Heroes and gods were of equal importance in the supernatural sphere and were invoked together in oaths and prayers to guard city and country (e.g., Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 184; Isocrates, *Plataicus* 60). The attraction of heroes and hero-cults in promoting identity both for a community and for a group of people derived from the fact that they were local and therefore more unique than the panhellenic gods.

The prominent role of heroes in state cult is evident in the epigraphical record of all Greek states. In Athens, heroes were a particularly important feature of official religion (Kearns 1989), a fact illustrated by the Cleisthenic reforms in the late sixth century, when the citizen body was divided into tribes, each named after a hero chosen by the Pythia at Delphi from a list of a hundred names (Herodotus 5.66; *Athenaiōn Politeia* 21.6; Kron 1976). The importance of a hero for the internal development of a city could be enhanced when needed, as was the case with Theseus, who rose to prominence in the classical period when credited with the synoecism of Attica. At the foundation of Messene in 370, as the capital of the new, free Messenia, the old heroes were called up again (Pausanias 4.27.6), an action underlining the idea of the heroes forming the core of the city. But the allocation of a hero to a particular site seems in many cases to have been rather arbitrary. An intimate and original connection with a particular hero was far from necessary. This multilocality of heroes and hero-cults, often with a clear political agenda, had the outspoken aim of strengthening one's own position versus that of neighboring communities: the possessor of the hero and, most frequently, the hero's bones would have the upper hand in a conflict.

When heroes were relocated their bones played an important role, and one reason for keeping a hero's grave secret was to prevent such movements. Bone transferral seems to have been particularly motivated by politics and was used as propaganda, as in the case of the bones of Orestes acquired by the Spartans (Herodotus 1.66–8; Boedeker 1993; McCauley 1999) or that of Theseus' bones, brought back from Scyrus to Athens in 476/5 by Cimon (Plutarch *Theseus* 36 and *Cimon* 8).

Mythic heroes could be moved from one location to another by the adoption or elaboration of different versions of a myth, and heroic mythology provided a means for constructing the past of the community. Agamemnon is placed by Homer at Mycenae and he had a hero-shrine at this site. Still, his cult was prominent at Sparta, where he had a sanctuary and was worshiped in the guise of Zeus-Agamemnon, together with his companion Alexandra-Cassandra. The Laconian link with the

Pelopid heroes became even more pronounced when the Spartans transferred the bones of Orestes, Agamemnon's son, from Arcadia in order to secure success in their conflict with Tegea. The Spartan promotion of Agamemnon and his family supported their claims as leaders of the Peloponnese, supplanting Argos.

Expelling a hero with whom the political establishment was dissatisfied was also attempted. After his war with Argos, Cleisthenes of Sicyon tried to banish the hero Adrastus, an Argive (Herodotus 5.67). When discouraged by the Pythia, he invited the hero Melanippus from Thebes (with Theban consent), since he was the bitter enemy of Adrastus. Finally, Cleisthenes stripped Adrastus of his sacrifices and festivals and transferred them to Melanippus.

On a local level – deme, village, or region – the prominence of heroes is even more apparent and their connection to the land is fundamental. The sacrificial calendars of Attica illustrate the spectrum of different kinds of such local heroes, many closely linked to the topography. In the deme of Thorikos, the most expensive victims, bovines, were given to the eponymous hero of the deme, Thorikos, and to Cephalus, who was intimately connected with this deme in myth (*SEG* 33.147). Other local heroes lacked proper names and were simply identified as "The hero of . . . ", such as the Hero at the Salt-Works or the Hero at Pyrgilion (*LSS* 19, 84–5). At the other end of the spectrum, we find a group of anonymous heroines, who only received *trapezai*, tables of offerings, at very low cost.

Hero-cult was also the prime focus for private cult associations, known primarily from the epigraphical record (Ferguson 1944). The members, *orgeōnes*, often owned the shrine and gathered there to sacrifice to their hero. The *orgeōnes* of Egretes, a hero known only from one inscription (*LS* 47), leased his *hieron* and other buildings to a private person for ten years, on the condition that the tenant would look after the precinct, including the trees growing there, and that the members would have access to the shrine for their annual celebration. This sacrifice ended with a meal in the sanctuary, which was equipped with a kitchen, a small stoa, couches, and tables.

The relationship between private individuals and heroes is harder to trace in detail; dedications in hero-shrines provide one way of spotting them. The small size of many cult-places for heroes also points to them being used primarily by small groups of people on a local or private level. The specialization of many heroes must have made them attractive on a personal basis, the most obvious case being the healing heroes (Verbanck-Piérard 2000). A small healing shrine, catering to local needs, has been found at Rhamnous, on the east coast of Attica: two simple rooms for incubation, an altar in an open courtyard where dedications were displayed, a sacred table, and a cistern. The hero was originally nameless, but identified with Amphiaraus when the sanctuary was renovated on local initiative in the late third century (*IG* ii^2 1322).

In the hellenistic period, the concept of the hero and hero-cults were partly transformed and put to new uses by private individuals (Hughes 1999). Apart from tombstones carrying the word *hērōs*, a development touched on above, there was an increase in the appearance, size, and location of funerary monuments for private individuals (Kader 1995). New evidence for these practices has come to light at Messene, in the form of a grave conjectured to be the *hērōon* of the artist Damophon and his sons near the temple of Asclepius and a series of hellenistic burial monuments for families at the gymnasium (Themelis 2000). Some of these monuments may have been the focus for some kind of ritual, though it is not evident that the deceased were

called heroes. In this period, the term *hērōon* used in a funerary context referred to a substantial monument for the departed person, rather than to a cult-place for a hero, and the same term could be applied to very ordinary tombs as well.

The most striking development of hero-cults of the hellenistic period is the foundation by private citizens of hero-cults for their family members, a practice previously reserved for the state. These institutions, beginning in the third century BC and best documented through the epigraphical record, aimed to promote the prominence of the family by declaring a member or members of it as heroes and laying down the guidelines for the cult, covering hereditary priesthoods, animal sacrifices and dining, often on a large scale, games, and the management of the cult-place, which was in some instances substantial. The private cult-foundations can be seen as an upgrading of the cult of the dead, through the adoption of the ritual practices and terminology of traditional hero-cults, but they are not to be considered typical of funerary cult in general of the same period.

The testament of Epicteta of Thera, dated to around 200 BC, provides for the completion of a Mouseion and the establishment of an annual three-day festival with sacrifices to the Muses, the heroes Phoenix (her late husband) and Epicteta herself, and their two dead sons, also called heroes (Laum 1914: vol. 2, no. 43). The sacrificial rituals are described in detail. The meat from the victims was to be divided between the members of the cult association and religious officials. At the end of the second century, the city of Aegale on Amorgus agreed to administer a donation made by Critolaus to provide for the heroization of his dead son, Aleximachus, and the yearly public feast (Laum 1914: vol. 2, no. 50). This event included a procession, in which officials of the city participated, the sacrifice of an ox eaten at a public banquet at the gymnasium, and games at which a ram, boiled in a cauldron and set in front of Aleximachus' statue, served as a prize.

None of these documents can be linked to any archaeological remains. A large building constructed in around 100 BC at Calydon to honor a private individual named Leon can give us an idea of the appearance of such shrines. A peristyle court with rooms on three sides could have been used for games, while one room equipped with couches was meant for dining for privileged participants in the cult. The central room focused on the cults of Zeus, Heracles, Eros, and Aphrodite, as well as of Leon himself, interred in a vaulted burial chamber below and now worshiped as the "New Heracles."

Conclusion: Heroes between the Gods and the Dead

Greek religion can be imagined as being based on three major components: gods, heroes, and the dead, all linked to each other. There is a distinction between them as to their degree of mortality but also as to their power, the immortal gods being the highest and most universal while the departed are confined to their graves and possess little power. Oscillating between these two poles are the heroes, dead but still divine. The importance of the heroes lies in their dual nature, which renders them adaptable to different conditions and needs at all levels of Greek religion and society.

The conceptualization of heroes as distinct from the gods, particularly the gods of the sky, and instead as more akin to the dead and the gods of the underworld, has its

theoretical underpinning in the division of Greek religion into an Olympian and a chthonian sphere, with the two spheres being viewed as the opposites of each other. This model is, however, in many ways too restricted and does not capture the full potential of heroes and hero-cults (Ekroth 2002:310–25; Schlesier 1991–2; but see also Scullion 1994). Moreover, from the archaic period onwards, when hero-cults began to be a prominent feature of Greek religion, the heroes and the dead gradually became more separated, conceptually as well as in reality. The ordinary dead began to be perceived as dangerous and as having to be averted, and funerary legislation suppressed the traits of tomb cult that overlapped with those of hero-cult, such as animal sacrifice, while burials of the ordinary dead were kept distinctly apart from the areas of the living and of the gods (Johnston 1999a; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995a). Though they were dead, the heroes moved closer to the gods, but they always remained closest to the worshipers.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

A number of aspects of Greek heroes and their cults are covered in Hägg 1999. On the origins of hero-cults, the diversity of the evidence, and its complexities, see Antonaccio 1995 and Boehringer 2001, who basically include all relevant sites. The oikists and their roles as recipients of religious attention are discussed in Malkin 1987. The different kinds of heroes are laid out in Farnell 1921, though Farnell's classification also illustrates the difficulties of dividing heroes in to such groups. Some categories have been treated separately, such as athletes (Bohringer 1979 and Fontenrose 1968), enemies (Visser 1982) and heroines (Larson 1995 and Lyons 1997). The cults of Heracles and his religious status are treated, on the basis of written as well as archaeological evidence, by Bergquist (1973, 2005), Verbanck-Piérard (1989 and 1992), and Lévêque and Verbanck-Piérard (1992).

Owing to the rich epigraphical evidence, local heroes from Attica are especially well known: see Kearns 1989, as well as Kron 1976, for the eponymous heroes of the Cleisthenic tribes. The sacrificial rituals, including the ritual terminology, are discussed in Ekroth 2002, who also relates the cults of heroes to those of the gods and the ordinary dead. There is no really comprehensive overview of the archaic, classical and hellenistic cult-places of heroes, partly owing to the complexity of the evidence. A collection of many of the principal sites, though with little analysis, is given in Abramson 1978; see also Pariente 1992. The written evidence for relics and bones is to be found in Pfister 1909–12. Hughes 1999 discusses the main developments of hero-cults in the post-classical period; see also Wörrle and Zanker 1995.

PART III

Communicating with the Divine

CHAPTER SEVEN

Prayers and Hymns

William D. Furley

Prayer and Hymn

When modern Western man seeks privileged information with a view to improving his lot he turns to science, law, medicine, school; with pounding heart he hears the doctor's diagnosis, the lawyer's advice, the scientist's judgment, or the teacher's assessment and feels either fortified or mortified. Of course, people still pray and sing hymns in Western "civilization," too, but I wanted to indicate how all-encompassing and *important* prayer and hymn-singing to the gods were for ancient Greek man. For the professions in those days, whilst remarkably advanced and inventive, had not achieved the ascendancy which they have nowadays over religion. Ancient man quite simply still believed in invisible powers which held him in their grip. Even the famous Sophists in fifth-century Athens, despite their best efforts to undermine belief in the traditional Olympian deities, were hardly successful with the majority of the population, as continued worship showed (Mikalson 1983). For the intellectually enlightened, religious belief simply shifted from the "primitive" Olympians to new-fangled deities such as Fate, Chance, Health, or the Platonic Forms. It is not always appreciated that the famous "atheists" of antiquity were not labeled thus for not believing in *any* gods, but for believing in *other*, unconventional gods. That is the joke behind Aristophanes' comic portrayal of Socrates, the greatest intellectual skeptic of the time: it was not that he was godless, but rather that he worshiped mad gods like clouds and atmospheric "swirl."

In view of this we should not envisage Greeks, even in the intellectual center of Athens, as ever having stopped praying and singing hymns to the gods. They certainly never stopped sacrificing or processing to temples, and prayers and hymns were an integral part of sacrifice and processions. Another way of putting this is to say that, since the vast majority of Greeks maintained an unbroken belief in supernatural powers throughout antiquity, and since these powers were conceived almost without exception in anthropomorphic (or better) shape, there was a never-ending desire and

requirement to communicate with these deities. For that is surely the simplest definition of this topic: prayers and hymns are attempts by men and women to communicate with gods by means of the voice.

If I propose that the Greeks prayed often to one or several of their many gods to ask them for good things, and sang hymns to worship these gods, I expect the general reaction would be "Well, I knew that," and one might stop there. We have a preconceived notion of what a prayer or a hymn is like, and anyone who has studied the Greeks even a little has an idea of which gods the Greeks addressed. So perhaps I should concentrate on surprising features of Greek hymns and prayers, or at least on selected themes which clash somewhat with preconceived notions.. If I do this, it is at the cost of a systematic treatment of "hymns and prayers" in handbook style. This can be found elsewhere. Nevertheless I shall attempt in the course of thematic remarks to allude to the main categories and distinctions involved. I will also try, in the main, to treat hymns and prayers together, although we can certainly distinguish them as phenomena. Like us, the Greeks had different words for hymns and prayers (*hymnoi* and *euchai*), as well as a bewildering array of terms for the different species of the genus "hymn"; and there were various words for "prayer," too, also with distinct shades of meaning. More on those later.

The preconceived notion is, presumably, that one "speaks" a prayer and "sings" a hymn. Hence Bremer (1981:193) gave an umbrella definition of "hymn" as "a sung prayer." Pulleyn (1997:44–7) took issue with this, arguing that hymns are often not, or not really, prayers, because they do not ask the gods for anything and that is what prayer does: ask the gods for good things. But the objection is a misunderstanding, in my opinion, as Bremer's definition of the hymn as a "sung prayer" depends on a wider notion of "prayer" ("address to god(s)") than Pulleyn uses ("request to god(s)"). But singing is certainly one formal attribute of hymns which sets them apart from prayers. The Greeks trained choruses of men and women, boys and girls, to sing hymns to the accompaniment of various musical instruments within the context of cult. Alkman's Louvre *partheneion*, for example, was a cult song (probably) for Artemis sung by a chorus of girls; or Pindar's sixth paean was a cult song for Delphic Apollo performed by young men. Moreover, even if we did not believe our numerous sources which refer to sung cult hymns for the gods, we do have some texts of hymns transmitted with a sort of musical score to denote either the required vocal melody or the musical accompaniment (Furley and Bremer 2001: no. 2.6). We even have a few pictures of choruses performing song-dance. This must have been a feature of Greek society throughout the era concerned which was both utterly familiar to the Greeks and virtually unknown to us in Western society: outdoor choric performances of cult songs as part of community worship (Golder and Scully 1994–5). Choruses sang hymns as they processed to temples; they sang them standing, or moving sedately, round the god's altar when they arrived there. And some song-dances for the god of inebriation, Dionysus, must have been – to judge from vase paintings of dancing maenads – as wild as any modern dancing to rock music. Singing involves not only melody but also meter: the vast repertoire of ancient Greek lyric meters was designed to introduce variety and beauty in choric performance, not to baffle modern students. Presumably the tunes and rhythms stuck in the ancient ear as tenaciously as some modern pop songs.

These *musical* features must have been largely lacking in prayers, although spoken language has its own melody and rhythm, and repetition can result in a sort of chant.

So I think Pulleyn (1997) is right when he says that hymns are distinguished from prayers not only by these formal aspects I have just been describing but also by their *desire to please* through artistic merit. This is a functional distinction. A prayer might be carefully formulated to convey a message as persuasively as possible to the god, but the Greeks probably did not envisage the god being particularly *pleased* to receive the prayer. Indeed Lucian has an amusing description of a rather harassed Zeus on Olympus opening the "prayer wells" in heaven to listen to the barrage of various and conflicting prayers reaching him from earth (*Ikaromenippos* 24–5). The hymn, on the other hand, was an *agalma* in its own right, a beautiful thing, designed by its words, music, dance-steps, and the beauty of its performers to please the god's ear and eye. It was intended as *entertainment* for the god(s), a treat designed on the one hand to tempt the god to attend (he might have been distant and elsewhere before) and on the other to sway his mind to a pleasant mood of benevolence toward the community worshiping him so lavishly. In this way, the hymn is part of the system of reciprocal *charis* which many scholars have recognized in Greek religion (Bremer 1998). *Charis* is difficult to translate, because it is (at least) two-sided. On the one hand it expresses the feeling of gratitude felt by humans to the gods for giving them good things, and on the other it means that "grace" or "bounty" which the gods give men. And the word is related to *chairō*, Greek for "feel joy or happiness." In worship the Greeks aimed at generating an atmosphere of reciprocal *charis*; they would express their grateful worship of the splendid gods; the gods, in turn, would – hopefully – grant them their *charis*, goodwill, which translated into wealth, health, and power. We can see how hymn-singing is part of the human "*charis*-drive"; it is an aesthetic offering to go with other material offerings (animal sacrifice, libations, incense, etc.) designed to secure divine goodwill. Prayer, on the other hand, is a request put to god(s) backed up by references to *other acts* of worship (sacrifice etc.) which might induce the god(s) to grant the request. The prayer-request itself is not conceived as an offering, either material or aesthetic.

Worship as Heightened Discourse

I noticed recently that the new Pope Benedict XVI recommended that people enjoy their holidays by communing with nature, meditating on the deep issues of life, and praying. It struck me that this *private* and *meditative* aspect of Christian piety is very much at odds with ancient Greek prayer. For ancient Greek prayer and hymn-singing does everything it can to draw attention to itself as a public display. It is a form of *heightened* expression which claims a god's attention by rhetorical structures as well as by contextual framing. By the former I mean the resources of words which the prayer or singer deploys in his attempt to make his case irresistible; by the latter I mean the ritual structure which frames the prayer. Let us take the latter first.

The Ritual Frame

Burkert (1972) has well described the primacy of animal sacrifice in Greek religion and shown how the act of killing forms the centerpiece of Greek worship. The

worshipers move away from profane space in a small (or vast) procession which includes the sacrificial animals and equipment. When they arrive at the god's altar they perform a number of actions focusing on the victim, which Burkert interprets as attempts to kill pleasingly, with the animal's consent, so as not to offend deity (cf. Chapter 8 in this volume). But the sequence of events could be interpreted quite differently, namely as actions framing the main purpose: making a petition to god. The petition is expressed in words of prayer; all preliminary and subsequent actions prepare for, and promote, the effectiveness of the petition. That is, the animal sacrifice is not the *point* of the ritual, it is rather the way of calling the god's attention to a matter of great importance for the humans gathered. As god can take or grant human life, so humans "give" an animal life to god in the hope of recompense. But it is the recompense (*charis*) which counts; in what form the recompense should be given is formulated by the prayer. Hence we could say that the prayer is the *point* of the ritual; everything else goes toward giving this maximum emphasis and persuasiveness.

A parody of sacrifice, hymn-singing, and prayer is given by Aristophanes in his *Birds*, when "Bird-City," Nephelokokkygia, is founded in an inaugural act. A parody is only funny if based on reality: the audience must recognize the perversion of reality in order to laugh. Hence this passage is as serious a witness to the points made above as one could wish. Peisthetairos announces his intention of sacrificing to the new gods of the bird-city; he calls for a priest to lead the procession, and a slave to fetch the basket with sacrificial knife and lustral water (848–50). At this point the Chorus promptly strikes up an enthusiastic response, saying it wishes to approach the gods with "great and solemn processionals" (851–3); likewise, it wishes to sacrifice a sheep "for the sake of *charis*" (854–5). It exhorts itself to strike up a "Pythian cry," that is, a paean or *prosodion* to Apollo, which a piper called Chairis should accompany on the *aulos* (857–8). We have here, then, the classical elements of public worship: animal sacrifice prefaced by a procession which moves along to the tune of processional hymns to the gods. They carry the utensils (basket, knife, lustral water) necessary for the actual sacrifice (cf. Figure 7.1).

Then in line 862 they reach their destination (presumably an altar on stage) and Peisthetairos admonishes the priest to sacrifice to the new gods. He agrees, having first called for the basket-with-knife. Then, basket (or knife) in hand, he *proceeds to pray* – to a long list of gods designed to raise a laugh from the audience as it combines the traditional selection and order (as we know from other documents) with bird attributes; thus the priest tells the congregation to pray to "avian Hestia and hearth-holding kite and all the Olympian birds and lady-birds . . . " (865–7). The list gets longer and longer – clearly a parody of state ceremonial which tended to become overblown with pomp – until Peisthetairos cuts the priest off short, asking how he can call vultures and eagles to the sacrifice when one kite could carry the victim off. He, Peisthetairos, founder of bird-city, will complete the prayer and sacrifice alone. At this cue the Chorus strikes up an antistrophe, a "second pious, holy, song," this time to accompany the sprinkling of water on the victim's head, and to summon the deities, one by one – assuming, that is, they add, there's enough meat on the victim to go round. Peisthetairos completes the ceremony – probably with a symbolic swipe of the knife, rather than with true slaughter – saying "sacrificing, let us pray to the bird-gods" (903).

This wonderful parody of solemn ceremonial shows exactly how hymn-singing and prayer dove-tailed with the act of sacrifice itself. Hymns accompanied the procession;

Figure 7.1 A *prosodion* to Athene. Musicians and singers in arms. Vase in a private collection

prayer preceded the immolation; a ritual cry or hymn accompanied the pouring of lustral water over the victim's head. The gods were called to attend the sacrifice. Above all, sacrifice and prayer went hand in hand, combining words with actions to dispatch an animal life while asking for "health and salvation" (878) for the congregation. I think the poor sheep, which is described as nothing more than "chin and horns" (902), is very much the means to an end rather than the end in itself.

I want this passage of Aristophanes to stand for state ritual generally, in the hope that Aristophanic parody can instruct us about the real thing. But what of private communication with the gods? Let us look for a prayer as diametrically opposed to the public prayer for Nephelokokkygia as possible. Remember that I am still discussing prayer within its ritual context as a means of heightening, or framing, the intended message and beguiling the recipient.

In Theocritus' second idyll, called "the sorceress" (*Pharmakeutria*), a woman, Simaitha, complains that her lover Daphnis is untrue; by the light of the moon she utters an elaborate spell to various nocturnal deities – Selene, Artemis, Hecate – accompanied by a variety of ritual actions, with a view to luring her lover back. The poem is, of course, a literary fiction, but, again, like the Aristophanes passage, it can only work if it's "like" real life. For the poem is mimetic: the words are spoken by Simaitha as if the actions she refers to were actually happening. The reader visualizes her doing and saying the things she mentions in "real time," as it were. So this text represents, within the complex one might call religion, an opposite pole to the public inaugural ceremony parodied by Aristophanes. We see a woman alone (except for her slave woman, Thestylis, who carries out her orders) at night communing with "dark powers" and trying, by magic, to make a man fall back in love with her. She had, by the way, fallen in love with him during a chance encounter at a public holiday involving a procession in honor of Artemis.

Despite the radical difference of this situation from the prayer for Nephelokokkygia, we find the same interlacing of prayer and ritual offering with a view to charming underworld powers into granting a request. Simaitha burns various substances in a fire as she utters the wish: "as this substance burns in the fire, so should Daphnis burn with love for me." And, although her spells and incantations are directed at a human, Daphnis, she invokes goddesses (the ones already mentioned) to hear her prayer: "I will sing softly to you, goddess [Selene], and to chthonian Hecate *chaire*, dreadful Hecate, and accompany us to the fulfillment" (11–14). Moreover, a refrain in the poem refers to an object often used in love-magic, the *iunx*, a kind of spinning top

which was used to "draw" someone to one. The refrain goes "Iunx, draw that man to my home." Simaitha's sorcery is a miniature display no less carefully orchestrated than public sacrifice. Its success depends (in her eyes) on her ability to utter words and perform actions pleasing to the gods thought responsible for this department of human activity: love magic. The prayer is *performative* in the same way: the ritual actions and accouterments are intended to frame and underline the verbal message. Prayer, one might say, is a multimedia performance, involving sounds, sights, and smells. I doubt this is the kind of private prayer or meditation on the "deep meaning of life" which Pope Benedict XVI had in mind when he recommended prayer on holiday.

Persuasive Strategies

Having sketched what one might term the "ritual framing" of prayer and hymn-singing, I wish to turn to the rhetoric of these forms of utterance. By rhetoric I mean "strategies of persuasiveness" used largely unconsciously by the speaker/singer. As Race (1990:103) has said: "Every element in a cultic hymn is part of a rhetorical strategy whose purpose is to dispose the god favorably toward the request." The standard view is that prayers and hymns generally follow a tripartite structure of invocation–argument–prayer. That is, the worshiper first addresses the god(s) by name, adding "second-names" (*epiklēseis*) to invoke specific attributes of the god(s); next he states a number of reasons why the god(s) should hear his address; then, having prepared the ground, he utters the request. So this analysis is not much different to the careful formulation of a written application nowadays: one addresses the letter carefully to the appropriate recipient; one states the reason why one's request is justified or one's application for the job or grant appropriate, and one ends with an expression of hope that one's petition will be looked on favorably. This comparison is intended to show the importance of words in applying for aid of an existential nature and to convey that sense of anxious anticipation of the reaction of invisible fickle powers that the ancient pagan worshiper presumably felt.

Naming

> Zeus, whoever he really is, if this
> is the name by which he likes to be called,
> I call him by this name.
> I have no other guide,
> weighing all things up,
> but Zeus, if I must unburden my heart
> truly of its fruitless worry
> (*Agamemnon* 160–6)

sings the Chorus of Argive elders in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* when it recalls the dreadful sacrifice of Iphigeneia before the Trojan War and anticipates the doom which may mark Agamemnon's return.

O sweet message from Zeus, in what form
are you arriving in lovely Thebes
from Delphi, plentiful in gold?
My nerves are stretched in shaking
agitation of the heart,
– Hail! Delian Apollo! –
I am in awe of you. What claim
do you intend to make on me,
new, or one with a long history?
Tell me, please, child of Anticipation,
news from heaven.
(*Oedipus Tyrannus* 151–7)

sings the Chorus in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* when Thebes is afflicted by plague, and it hopes to receive an oracle from Delphi which will instruct it on the path to salvation. Now these two examples are literary prayer-hymns; they express a sense of vague (or very specific) anxiety which suits the dramatic context: the songs of the Chorus are functional elements in the unfolding drama. Nevertheless, we know from many sources that a necessary and tricky part of polytheism was first to establish to which god(s) one should address oneself in prayer and sacrifice. Oracles and prophets were regularly asked by states and individuals: "To which god(s)?" (Versnel 1981b:5–6; cf. Chapter 9 in this volume) The answer was usually a combination of gods almost like ingredients in herbal medicine: not one, but a combination of active ingredients was thought most efficacious. Then the worshiper went home and sacrificed and prayed to precisely this combination of powers, stating their names and attributes meticulously (Versnel 1990 talks of the "henotheistic moment" in polytheism). So, whilst I think there is truth in the contention of Pulleyn (1997:106) that the elaborate naming at the beginning of hymns and prayers is more for the greater glory of the gods than because the worshiper is worried he may omit one, I think we should remember that the identification of the right gods *was* a crucial matter, one requiring great verbal care. Elsewhere I have referred to the "diagnostic" quality of many theatrical hymns: they ask rhetorically which of a number of deities is responsible for the human crisis being staged (Furley 2000). In real life, prayers and hymns named the deities which had been identified previously by *mantikē* or were traditional in a given area. One could not afford to pray and sacrifice with a question prefixed: "Are you the right god(s) for this petition?".

Another parody, this time from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, illustrates the onus of due naming in prayer-hymns well. The tragic poet Agathon is overheard rehearsing with his chorus of girls; they ask him "To which of the gods is our celebration addressed? Speak. I'm inclined faithfully to worship the gods." The following verses involve a lyric dialogue between Agathon and his chorus, in which he names a god and the chorus "echo" his suggestion; I give only the first two divinities mentioned (Austin and Olson 2004 ad loc.):

AGATHON. Praise now in your song
the drawer of golden bows,
Phoibos, who founded a city
in the land of the Simoeis.

CHORUS. Delight, O Phoibos,
in the melodious honor
of our most beautiful song!
Receive the sacred prize!
AGATHON. And sing the girl
in hills where oaks grow,
Artemis, wild huntress.
CHORUS. I follow, celebrating
the holy child of Leto,
Artemis, the never-pregnant.
(*Thesmophoriazusae* 107–19)

In what follows various other deities are mentioned which contribute to Agathon's art. We see here a lyric conceptualization of the process of selecting gods as helpers in a given task (in this case, lyric poetry itself). We note the care taken to stipulate the precise identity of the deity called upon. Parenthood, association with certain places, typical behavior, etc. are all mentioned as a way of defining the character of the divine power addressed. Of particular interest is the way the chorus ask Agathon the question which had to be answered before any prayer or hymn: "To which gods should we sing?". Since one can see the Greek pantheon as a symbolic representation of human concerns, the worshiper's first task was to select the right symbols (gods with specific attributes) for subsequent verbal manipulation.

Arguments

It turns out that prayers and hymns differ in their persuasive middle section in which the worshiper states reasons, both explicit and implicit, for holding the god's attention favorably. Prayers, unlike hymns, concentrate on variations on the *do ut des* ("I give so that you may give") theme, by which they hope to persuade the deity that he really ought to return a favor to the human worshiper. The latter can recall previous sacrifices, point to his present lavish donation, or promise future offerings in order to encourage the addressee to dispense some of his *charis*. In Book 1 of the *Iliad* the priest Chryses prays to Apollo Smintheus: "Mouse-god, if ever I roofed a nice temple for you or burnt up the fat thigh-bones of bulls or goats for you, grant me this wish" (39–40; *da quia dedi* ["Give because I have given"]). Later in the same book he prays to the same god: "If ever you've listened to me before when I prayed, honoring me and greatly hurting the Achaioi, grant me now this wish" (453–5; *da quia dedisti* ["Give because you have given before"]). In Book 6 the Trojan priestess Theano prays to Athena, having given her a beautiful *peplos*: "Mighty Athena who saves cities, excellent among goddesses, break the spear of Diomedes, grant that he may fall before the Skaian Gates, so that we may sacrifice to you straightaway twelve unworked yearling oxen, if you pity this town and the Trojans' wives and helpless children" (6.305–10; *da quia dabo* ["Give because I will give"]). In Book 8 Agamemnon again argues before Zeus: "I've never passed by an altar of yours on the way here by ship but I burned the fat and the thigh-bones of oxen on every one – so grant me now my wish" (238–42; *da quia dedi*). In view of numerous passages such as these some have concluded that the Greeks were a mercenary lot in their religion: they thought that

the principle "one good turn deserves another" applied to relations between men and gods as well as to interpersonal friendships (Pulleyn 1997:28–9). But the Greeks themselves questioned the value of their gifts of burnt fat and bones to the gods. The Prometheus myth told by Hesiod turns precisely on Zeus' irritation that Prometheus apparently tried to trick him by offering him an attractive but nutritionally worthless portion of the ur-sacrifice at Mekone. Comedians and satirists never tired of joking about the idea of the gods addicted to the sweet-smelling smoke of sacrifice wafting up to heaven. On a more serious note, Euthyphro in Plato's dialogue of that name is made to see by Socrates that the gods do not *need* anything from men: that would make them dependants. What they want is for men to *please* them (a form of the verb *chairō* is used here again) with their worship. So do not let us think that the *charis* relationship operative in worship was mercenary. Undoubtedly it was *based* on reciprocity in human relations ("one good turn deserves another") but it was definitely sublimated to suit relations with gods who were seen to need nothing from men but who might grant everything when so disposed. We may partly explain the emphasis on past/present/future sacrifices in Greek prayer by my earlier point: the ritual frame. Since prayer was made at the moment of immolation, what more natural than to associate the two things in prayer language? Since (in my view) the worshiper wished to draw the gods' attention to his prayer by blood-sacrifice, it was likely that he would say so to the gods in words: "As I sacrifice [have sacrificed/will sacrifice] this animal so I pray you grant me – ." We could explain the formulaic quality of these *do ut des* utterances in prayer by reference to ritual structure rather than a literal-mindedness on the part of the Greeks about gods' likes and appetites.

A type of argument shared by hymns and prayers concerns myth, that is, narrative about gods' deeds in the past. I think we can recognize two aspects of this. On the one hand we find prayers referring to past incidents in which the god addressed showed him- or herself favorably inclined to help, and this is used as an argument why he or she should repeat the favor now. On the other hand, hymns and prayers may tell a traditional story about the god addressed to illustrate his or her virtue, which sets a precedent for the present request. As kings and generals like to have their deeds extolled, so gods might like to be reminded of their power and glory. The first type of myth relates to the worshipers' personal experience; the second to the fund of traditional stories in general, or perhaps local, circulation.

The first poem in our editions of Sappho's extant fragments is an interesting example of the former type. The "I" calls on Aphrodite to help her in a love-affair, using the argument: "If ever you helped me in the past help me now." Then the "I" describes how the goddess did in fact appear in the past, riding her chariot pulled by birds. On landing the goddess asked with a resigned smile: "What do you want now? Who is it *this time* that I should persuade to fall in love with you?". The poem closes by returning to present time: "Thus help me now!". For this poem Sappho has constructed a personal myth of epiphany to back up a plea to Aphrodite to send present aid. The prayer does not cite lavish sacrifices as the reason why Aphrodite should grant the request, but rather the speaker invokes a precedent of divine *charis*. Moreover, she visualizes the goddess' *charis* through poetic art. She describes the golden aspect of the goddess leaving father Zeus' palace, the swift winged chariot which taxied her to earth, and the immortal smile which played on her lips when she spoke to the lover in distress. This evocation of a past display of divine grace is

intended, by a kind of sympathetic magic, to promote a reappearance by the goddess. It is a form of verbal flattery designed to entice the goddess. The ploy is still more apparent in Sappho's second surviving prayer-hymn to Aphrodite (fr. 2 Voigt); here the description of the *locus amoenus* filled by Aphrodite's aura is a verbal spell designed to lure the goddess "here from Crete to this your temple."

Many choral hymns sung at festivals use myth as a way of evoking a god's previous coming to this very spot. Elsewhere I have called these "advent myths," arguing that the lyric narrative of an original coming is (a) an invitation to the god(s) to come *now* and (b) a way of convincing participants at the festival that the god is likely to come, or rather, is already present among them (Furley and Bremer 2001:1.97). For example, we possess a prose summary of a hymn (a paean) by Alkaios celebrating Apollo's coming to Delphi after a protracted absence among the Hyperboreans. When he finally returned to his oracle in Delphi the hymn describes how nature celebrated: nightingales and swallows sang, the Castalian spring flowed silver, and the river Kephisos rose (Furley and Bremer 2001: no. 2.1). Some four centuries later another Delphic hymn whose text survives as an inscription describes how Apollo *first* arrived in Delphi after journeying from his birthplace Delos. The text of the hymn (Furley and Bremer, 2001: no. 2.6.2) combines description of the present festival (music, sacrifice, hymn-singing) with the advent myth to evoke a picture of Apollo joining the worshipers at their celebration of him: reciprocal *charis* indeed! I would, incidentally, warn all those who wish to see in the famous *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* two originally separate parts, one Delian and one Delphic. For it is precisely the combination of both parts – the god's birth in Delos and his journey to Delphi to found the oracle – which constitutes the advent myth essential to Delphic worship.

We can see how narrative of past events "resurrects" them in listeners' minds in Christian religious services. The Christmas and Easter stories are retold each year not merely to recall something which happened in the distant past in a faraway land, but to announce the recurrence of the miracle: "Christ is born!" or "Christ is risen from the dead!". This verbal re-enactment of mythical events to underpin present worship is fundamental to ancient Greek religion. Before Plato, myths about the gods were told in poetry – hymns, that is. Presently I will consider the different forms these hymns could take. At this point I wish to stress the feature shared by prayers and hymns: that "reminders" to the gods of their past appearances and actions are a form of argument that they should repeat their generosity now. In hymns the narrative is usually explicit, sometimes multiple: various actions of the god(s) are recalled. The centrality of myth in hymnic discourse goes a long way to explaining how other poetic forms often "branch off" into myth at the earliest possible opportunity. Why should epinician, which celebrates an athlete's prowess, suddenly tell a tale about a god or hero associated with the athlete's home town, or the place where he won his crown? Answer: because this form of panegyric was ingrained in the poet's mind through cult poetry. Why does choral lyric in tragedy (and, for that matter, comedy) so often launch into mythological paradigmata? Same answer. Moreover, the logical link between invocation of a god and narration of his or her prowess in hymnic literature also explains how myth could be used paradigmatically in other poetic forms. One was used to applying the lessons of myth to present concerns. Let one example suffice. On discovering the source of Phaidra's distress in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (love for her stepson) the Chorus launches (525–64) into hymnic address of Eros and Aphrodite,

the deities thought responsible for erotic passion. As "argument" supporting the Chorus's recognition of these gods as cause of the trouble it recalls two earlier instances of the brutal power of love: Heracles' rape of Iole at Oichalia and Zeus' destructive intercourse with Semele at Thebes. In both cases the Chorus points out that Aphrodite was behind the union. Of course readers are long familiar with such mythological exempla in Greek literature, and in discovering their relevance to the story. But what I wish to emphasize is the *origin* of this literary pattern: mythical narrative formed part of the argument of hymnic discourse, a way of rekindling divine power for present celebration by recreating the past in words. Prayers do this too, but largely through allusion: the complicated invocation of god(s) at the beginning of the prayer uses epithets and attributes of the god(s) which recall, in a word, the associated myth. Hermes is Argeiphontes (killer of Argos); Athene is Pallas (?wielder of the spear); Zeus is Cronides or Cronion (son of Cronus, but also his vanquisher).

Types of Prayers and Hymns

Prayers

Greeks prayed standing up, not kneeling down, with arms raised (see e.g. Demosthenes 21.52), or with a libation-bowl poised. It is possible that, in Athens and perhaps elsewhere, they prayed to the many Hermes statues distributed through the city as divine messenger between humans and gods. Vases show petitioners touching Hermes on the chin as they supplicate him to hear their prayer and perhaps pass it on to the right address on Olympus (Furley 1996:13–30). There were various verbs, with corresponding nouns, to denote the act: *euchomai* (*euchē* or *euchōlē*), *araomai* (*ara*) *lissomai* (*litē*), *hiketeuō* (*hiketeia*). Pulleyn (1997:59–66), in discussion with Aubriot-Sévin (1992:405–94), places these on a descending scale according to how much *charis* the person(s) praying thinks he has with the god(s). The type of prayer (*euchē* according to Aubriot-Sévin 1992; Pulleyn [1997: 63] talks about "*xenia*-prayers") which draws on a perceived store of *charis* as argument to sway the god(s) is at the top of this scale, *hiketeia* at the bottom because the person praying is like a suppliant throwing himself on the mercy of the god(s) without any *charis* reserves to draw on, whilst *litai* occupy a middle position. To put this a little differently: people turn to *litai* and *hiketeia* when they are in dire straits and are in no position to bargain with the gods by citing their previous, present, or future piety (Figure 7.2). They pray with emphasis on reciprocal *charis* when they hope to secure a favor from god(s) based on their generous worship. *Ara* tends to have the connotation of "curse" in prayers uttered with respect to other people (Corlu 1966:285–8), but it can also (in Homer) simply mean "prayer." *Euchomai* in Homer sometimes seems to mean "boast"; Pulleyn (1997:60–1) says that the original sense was simply "say solemnly," which was then used in the specific context of prayer. A passage which combines two nuances of prayer is *Iliad* 9.497–501, in which Phoenix implores Achilles to listen to their prayers as "even the gods can be swayed, and their honor, strength, and valor is greater. Men sway them through sacrifice and gentle prayers [*euchōlēis aganēisi*], through libation and the smoke of burnt offerings when they entreat them [*lissomenoi*] after a man has transgressed and done wrong." In

Figure 7.2 "A prayer is heard." Alkmene prays to Zeus for protection as Amphitryon and Antenor light the pyre. Clouds answer her prayer by pouring (rain-)water from urns. Paestan bell-krater from St. Agata dei Goti; ca. 340 BC. London, British Museum F 149

particular one notes the apotropaic force of prayers called *litai*: they serve to avert divine wrath following a human transgression (Pulleyn 1997:64).

Another taxonomy suggested by Pulleyn (1997:156–95) concerns the occasion of prayer. There is relatively little evidence for daily prayers at certain times (as in Islam; Pulleyn calls these "hour-glass" prayers); one might call prayers uttered in certain standard situations which tend to recur, such as plague, drought, before marching into battle, or before embarking on a ship, "situational"; finally, prayers uttered in an unforeseen, unique situation might be called "adventitious." At one extreme we hear of individuals who, like Theophrastus' superstitious man, pray in all possible eventualities to ward off harm (*Characters* 16); at the other we hear of rogues who ridiculed the gods' *sacra* in public to show their disdain for conventional behavior (Lysias,

Against Kinesias). One might think that there was an essential difference between public and private prayer (the one conspicuous, the other secluded), but in fact private prayer tended to be like public prayer only on a smaller scale: members of the household gathered to say, and witness, the prayers spoken by the family head.

Hymns

A first meaningful distinction is between the hymnic mode used by rhapsodes as prelude (technically *prooimion*) to their performances of epic, and hymns sung (usually by a chorus) as an element of cult (Race 1990:102–11). The *Homeric Hymns* fall in the first category: they consist largely of narratives about the god's birth and/or exploits and finish with a brief prayer to the god to receive the song graciously before the singer turns to another – presumably epic – song (Allen, Halliday, and Sikes 1936). The mode of these rhapsodic *prooimia* – dactylic hexameters, diction similar to that of Homer, epic narrative – was imitated (with the exception of the fifth *Hymn to Athena*) by Callimachus and adapted for later forms such as the *Orphic Hymns* (Quandt 1962), Proclus' *Hymns* (Van den Berg 2000), and the hymns we find dispersed through the magical papyri (Preisendanz, Heitsch, and Henrichs 1973–4:II.237–66). Such texts are usually *about* the god in the third person, describing his or her attributes and achievements rather than preparing the ground for a specific request (Race 1990:103). They may originally have been sung, like epic itself, then recited. They were, presumably, composed principally for performance at panhellenic song competitions. Clay (1989) is quite right that, collectively, they have the effect of charting the Olympians' prerogatives relative to Zeus and each other.

Cult hymns, on the other hand, were meant for performance during religious ritual, whether calendrical festival or special event. Here one can make distinctions using functional criteria (which cult? which god?), sometimes supported by formal characteristics (typical refrain, style etc.). Ancient taxonomies of cult hymns such as that of Proclus tend to associate hymn types with certain gods. Thus the dithyramb is said to be an excited type of cult song performed for Dionysus, whilst the paean and nome are more dignified songs performed in Apolline worship. With its typical refrain *iē Paian*, addressed to Paieon, an originally independent healer-god, and its continued association with the family of Olympian healers (Apollo, Asclepius, his sons and Hygieia herself), the paean may be thought to constitute a very distinctive class of supplicatory hymn. The core use of the paean seems to have been entreaty of a savior god by humans facing peril in, for example, battle or plague (Käppel 1992). The Theban *daphnēphorikon* was a form practiced by Pindar for a specific Theban cult of Apollo. Artemis typically had her *Partheneia*, or girls'-songs, and *oupingoi* ("we hear").

Another ancient distinction is that between the "hymn proper" performed round the god's altar and the "processional hymn" (*prosodion*) performed on the way there. Incidentally, we should not be misled by Alexandrian editions of Pindar's cult songs in separate books of paean*s*, dithyrambs, *prosodia*, *daphnēphorika*, and hymns (!) into thinking that the first types were not hymns; they were all hymns according to the general sense of the word *hymnos*; a separate book of *hymnoi* existed, presumably, as catch-all for compositions which were not recognizably paeans, dithyrambs, etc.

Cult hymns usually address the god(s) directly in the second person. Often they begin with a subsidiary invocation to the Muses or a local divinity "hosting" the presence of the god(s) addressed, or (in Euripides) by theological concepts such as "Holiness" (*hosia*) called in to mediate the intended communication between worshipers and gods. This preliminary bow to a secondary deity offsets the tripartite form of invocation–argument/narrative–prayer so commonly described. Hymnic address is usually more rhetorically and poetically finished than plain prayer. In particular, it is "eulogistic," weaving a web – the metaphor is common in Greek texts – of laudatory words evoking the god(s) power and glory (Furley 1995). The attributes chosen are often material: a beautiful throne for Aphrodite; a golden bow or lyre for Apollo; a beautiful garment for Athena. Here there is aesthetic cross-fertilization between word and visual art: cult statues of gods were no doubt modeled on descriptions of gods in canonical texts such as Homer and Hesiod; once these splendid *agalmata* of the gods existed and were on show they served in their turn as models for poetic description (Gladigow 1990). A suggestive form of adulation is also, as already described, narrative of past actions illustrating power or special gifts; the narrative acts as charter for the divine power which the hymn-singers wish to evoke on a specific occasion. Genealogical narratives such as we find in, for example, hymns to Asclepius praise the god by highlighting his or her impressive ancestry. Accounts of accession to a rightful place on Olympus such as we commonly find in hymns to Apollo (Furley and Bremer 2001:1.77–138, 2.21–100), for example, or the Epidaurian hymn to the Mother of the Gods (Furley and Bremer 2001: no. 6.2), show how a god achieved greatness and fitted into the cosmic scheme chaired by Zeus.

Most of the Greeks' cult poetry is lost. Until the late archaic masters of choral lyric – Simonides, Pindar, Bakchylides – raised the traditional forms of paean and dithyramb to new artistic heights, the majority of cults songs were, presumably, anonymous, traditional songs going back generations. A good example is perhaps the Cretan *Hymn of the Kouretes* (Furley and Bremer 2001: no. 1.1) which celebrates the birth of Zeus as the "Greatest Kouros." Owing to papyrus finds we now possess a fair amount of Pindar's paeans and dithyrambs and Bakchylides' dithyrambs, and can see how in the hands of these authors cult poetry became "literary." In particular, fifth-century dithyramb became a competition event notably at Athens, stimulating poets and choruses to ever higher poetic flights of fancy and ornament; plain, simple religiosity is lost as a result. This is not entirely true of Pindar's paeans, which combine elaborate structure and mythical ornament with a genuine feeling for Apolline majesty (Rutherford 2001). Pindar enjoyed a position of honor at Delphi, a position earned no doubt by the excellence of his compositions for festivals there. Then in the fourth century the texts of cult hymns began to be written down on stone at the major sanctuaries, Delphi and Epidaurus particularly, Athens to a lesser extent. It is a common observation that the epigraphical texts from this period (fourth to first centuries BC) are fairly primitive compositions without much poetic merit; whilst it is true that Isyllos' paean to Apollo and Asclepius (Furley and Bremer 2001: no. 6.4) is a dismal piece of writing, the same does not hold true for the famous paeans to Apollo with musical notation from Delphi, for example (Furley and Bremer 2001: nos 2.6.1, 2.6.2), one of which is datable to 128 BC. These show confident use of a meter (cretic-paeonic) and language which draw on traditional elements of Apolline

worship, an interesting "historical" narrative of how Apollo helped defeat the invading marauder Brennos, and then modulation into aeolic measures for what is perhaps the *prosodion* mentioned in one title. There have been modern "recordings" made of the music of these hymns (e.g. Gregorio Paniagua and the Atrium Musicae de Madrid's *Musique de la Grèce antique* [1979]). One can well imagine a chorus moving up the Sacred Way toward the temple of Apollo repeatedly singing these hymns. The Athenians were so pleased with them that they had them inscribed on the walls of their "treasury" at Delphi.

So one cannot write a history of cult song in ancient Greece. We possess fragments of varying poetic merit which have survived more or less fortuitously from what must have been a mass of hieratic poetry. I doubt there was a heyday of cult poetry; it was a continuous stream with notable stretches created by individual talents such as Pindar (or indeed the Athenian dramatists). There was fluctuation owing to rising or waning popularity of particular cults, and local tradition must have been extremely important. Sometimes Euripides refers to the founding of cults – for example of Hippolytus at Troizen, Iphigeneia at Brauron – with their attendant myths. One can be sure that cult at these localities featured hymns celebrating the interplay of divine power with heroic fates. I might close this essay with a challenge to the reader: to review in his or her mind the elements suitable for a prayer or hymn in the following situation: one has arrived as an army commander at the Peneus river in Thessaly. It is in flood owing to a recent deluge in the mountains inland and impassable for the troops. What animals should best be sacrificed and how should a prayer or supplicatory hymn be formulated to rectify the *impasse*?

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For prayers see above all the standard study of Pulleyn 1997, and also Des Places 1959, Corlu 1966, Versnel 1981b and Aubriot-Sévin 1992. For hymns see above all Furley and Bremer 2001 (two volumes of texts, translations, and commentaries), and also Bremer 1981, Devlin 1994, and Furley 1995 and 2000. For paeans see Käppel 1992 and Rutherford 2001 and for dithyrambs Zimmermann 1992. Bremer 1998 discusses the notion of reciprocity in Greek worship.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Greek Normative Animal Sacrifice

Jan N. Bremmer

In recent decades it has been increasingly recognized that sacrifice was the most central religious act for the Greeks. Yet its analysis has always been rather one-sided, since previous generations of scholars had to depend mainly on literary sources, which present a rather idealized and selective picture of what actually went on. In recent decades, however, new sacrificial calendars have been found, Greek vases have been shown to be very informative about sacrificial ideology and practices, and, even more excitingly, biologists have started to analyze the faunal remains of excavated altars. Consequently, we must continuously compare literary descriptions with artistic representations and, where possible, with the archaeological evidence. It is only in this way that we will gain a more realistic picture of the complex of Greek sacrifice.

Step-by-step accounts of Greek sacrifice seldom distinguish between Homeric and post-Homeric evidence, the latter of which is mainly Attic as regards the literary tradition. Yet it is clear that the ritual considerably expanded in the course of the archaic age, when growing urbanization and the concomitant increase in wealth provided the means and leisure for a more generous and more dramatic performance of sacrifice. Not only do we hear more in the fifth and fourth centuries about a special outfit for the sacrificers and a more elaborate ritual around the altar, but the killing of the animal itself was also sometimes dramatized in a most curious manner. As our detailed analysis will show, sacrifice was not an immutable ritual block, handed down unchanged over the centuries, but a living ritual, responding to the needs, possibilities, and intellectual questioning of the ever-changing Greek culture.

These new developments warrant a fresh look at the matter. We will start with a short description of the normative ritual, then study its ideology and practices, analyze the insiders' views of sacrifice, discuss the views of the most important contemporary students of Greek sacrifice, and conclude our study with some observations on the history and function of Greek sacrifice.

Normative Animal Sacrifice

We are fortunate that sacrifices already abound in our oldest literary source, Homer (ca. 700 BC). The most detailed description occurs in the *Odyssey* (3.430–63), which we will take as our point of departure. When Telemachus arrives in Pylos, Nestor prepares a sacrifice in honor of the goddess Athena by sending for a cow to be brought by a shepherd. On its arrival, a blacksmith covers the horns with gold foil and Nestor, together with his family, goes in procession to the altar. Two sons guide the animal by the horns and the other three carry, respectively, a jug with lustral water and barley groats in a basket, an ax, and a bowl to collect the blood. Having arrived at the place of sacrifice, where the fire is already ablaze, Nestor begins "the rite with the lustral water and the sprinkling of barley meal," prays fervently to the goddess Athena, cuts some of the hairs of the cow and throws them into the fire. Then the others pray and also throw barley groats forward. After these preliminary rites a son severs the tendons of the cow's neck, an act greeted by the cry *ololygē* from the females present, Nestor's wife, daughters, and daughters-in-law. Then the sons lift the cow up and cut its throat, and "its life-spirit left the bones." They dismember the animal and cut out its thigh-bones, which they wrap up in fat at both folds, with bits of raw meat upon them. Nestor burns them on wooden spits, having poured a libation of wine upon them. When they have burned the thigh-bones and tasted the innards, they carve up the rest of the carcass and roast the meat on five-pronged forks. Having roasted it and pulled it off the spits, "they dine sitting," and enjoy wine too. It is only after the end of this meal that for Homer the ceremony has come to an end.

Before the kill

Having seen the whole of a Greek sacrifice, let us now take a more detailed look at its parts. The sacrificial scene in the *Odyssey* starts with the choice of the animal. Naturally, Nestor sent for a cow, the largest domesticated animal available and the predominant victim in literature and art. Yet after the dark ages most sacrifices did not consist of cattle, and smaller animals were the rule for small communities and private sacrifices. Evidently, the cow was too valuable to be given away, even to the gods, and we should never forget that sacrifice is a matter of some economic calculation as well as a ritual obligation. As a symbolic statement, though, cattle remained the preferred animal and Athenian colonies and allies had to send a sacrificial cow to the Panathenaea. In important sanctuaries, cows (oxen) also constituted the majority, and in Apollo's temple at Didyma they remained the favorite victim, although they were often sacrificed quite young, as in Artemis' sanctuary in Boeotian Kalapodi.

The next most expensive full-grown sacrificial victim was the pig. Contrary perhaps to expectation, it was not the most popular animal in sacrifice. The pig was kept mainly for meat, in particular for fat, but it is a scavenger of human wastes; its rooting, digging habits make it less suitable for densely populated areas, and it needs the presence of water and shade, neither of which is continuously available in most places of ancient Greece. We do not find pigs, then, much employed in the great sanctuaries, except perhaps in Cypriotic sanctuaries of Aphrodite, and few gods were connected

with the pig in particular. The exceptions, confirming the case, are Hestia (who was the customary recipient of a preliminary, usually cheap, sacrifice), Demeter (the goddess whose sanctuaries were often situated outside the city and whose myths and rituals contained peculiar, uncanny motifs), and Dionysus (the god of wine, but also of a temporary dissolution of the social order). The choice of the pig seems to confirm Demeter's and Dionysus' "eccentric" places in the Greek pantheon.

Piglets, on the other hand, were very cheap. They were therefore popular for preliminary and, in particular, purificatory sacrifices, which were not meant for consumption and had to be burned whole. Interestingly, many terracottas representing girls, much less frequently boys, carrying piglets have been found in sanctuaries on Sicily and the Peloponnese. Since the mythical daughters of king Proitos of Tiryns were purified with pig's blood at the end of their initiation, a connection with adolescence seems very likely in this case.

The predominant sacrificial victims were sheep and goats, animals whose bones are often very difficult to distinguish. Attic sacrificial calendars prescribe mainly adult animals, but at Kalapodi Artemis received more she-goats than billy-goats. The state of the teeth shows that at Didyma adult animals were preferred to young or aged ones, but in Kalapodi younger animals were sacrificed throughout antiquity. Similarly, at the altar of Aphrodite Ourania in Athens, 77.2 percent of the sheep or goats were under 3–6 months and only about 3 percent as old as 2.5–3 years. In the case of Aphrodite even cheaper offerings were quite normal, and the sacrifice of kids and lambs fits this picture.

Listing victims in the way we have done could suggest that they were all more or less acceptable to the gods. Such an impression is hardly true. In addition to the age of the victim, the worshipers also had to make decisions about its sex and color. In general, male gods preferred male victims, whereas goddesses preferred female ones. Yet this was not a fixed law but rather a rule with notable exceptions, since in Artemis' sanctuary at Kalapodi the bones of bulls have been found and in the Samian Heraion those of bulls, rams, and boars, and Persephone frequently received rams. Similarly, sacrificial regulations often specified the color of the victim, black being the preferred color for chthonic deities.

Having looked at the choice of victim, we now turn to its treatment. Naturally the gods only rejoiced in splendid gifts, so the victim had to be perfect and undamaged. Admittedly, sacrificial calendars often specify wethers (castrated rams), and indeed bones of a wether have been found in Kalapodi, just as in Didyma the bones of castrated oxen have been encountered, but these animals had evidently been reclassified as "undamaged." This mental operation must have been facilitated by the fact that castration improves the size of animals and the quality of their meat. It was only in Sparta that sacrifices were small and cheap, and even allowed mutilated animals. This practice must have been influenced by Spartan ideology. Too much free meat would have softened up the warriors, and the main Spartan meat supply had to come via the hunt; indeed, Laconian hounds were famous all over the ancient world.

In order to enhance the festal character of the occasion, Nestor has a smith cover the horns of the cow with gold. This was obviously something only a king or a wealthy community could afford, but the practice lasted well into hellenistic times. It was more normal, though, to adorn the victims with ribbons and garlands round their

heads and bellies. The sacrificers themselves also rose to the occasion. They took a bath, put on festive white clothes and, similarly, wreathed themselves; it was only in a few preliminary or peculiar sacrifices that wreaths were lacking. When, during a sacrifice, Xenophon heard that his son Gryllus had fallen in the battle of Mantinea (362 BC), he took off his wreath, but when he later heard that his son had fought courageously, he put it on again and continued the sacrifice. Yet a bath, white clothes, and wreaths could also fit other festive occasions. The sacred character of the sacrifice was stressed by the absence of shoes, as the vases clearly show.

In Homeric times, we do not yet hear about these extensive preparations on the part of the sacrificers, but by the classical period the Greeks had clearly dramatized the beginning of sacrifice. This appears also from the sacrificial *pompē*, which in the *Odyssey* is only small, but in archaic times developed into quite a procession, as texts and vases clearly demonstrate. In fact, archaic black-figure vases only show the processions but never scenes around the altar. These only became popular on the later red-figure vases (cf. Chapter 26 in this volume).

At the front of the procession an aristocratic girl (the *kanēphoros*) walked with a beautiful basket on her head, sometimes of silver or even gold-plated, which contained the sacrificial knife covered over with barley groats and ribbons. Male adolescents led the victim along, and a male or female piper played music to dictate the walking rhythm. Depending on the occasion, there could be various pipers and (exclusively male) players of string instruments. The great Panathenaeic procession may even have known as many as sixteen musicians: the largest orchestra known from classical Greece! This music had become such an integral part of the ritual in post-Homeric times that Herodotus (1.132) was struck by its absence from Persian sacrifice. Then adult males and females followed in a throng, sometimes with knights among them. It is interesting to note that the central place of sacrifice was reflected by the participation of representatives of the whole community in the event. Boys and girls, men and women – all had a role to play.

In the *Odyssey* the animal is guided along by the sons of Nestor. Evidently, it does not give any trouble, as is to be expected in a text portraying an ideal sacrifice. Indeed, the willingness of the victim was an important part of Greek sacrificial ideology, which stressed that the victim was pleased to go up to the altar, sometimes that it could hardly wait to be sacrificed! This emphasis on willingness goes back to archaic hunting practices, where the hunters pretended that the animal had voluntarily appeared in order to be killed. The importance of the theme appears from the fact that even in the twentieth century legends about voluntarily appearing victims were recorded in those countries still practicing sacrifice: Finland and modern Greece. Obviously, ideology and practice did not always concur, and vases show us ephebes struggling with the victim, or ropes tied to its head or legs in order to restrain it.

Having arrived at the sacred place, the worshipers stood around the altar, as the texts say. In reality, the topography of the ancient temple indicates that they must have stood in a semi-circle between the altar and the temple, with the temple at their back. Now the actual sacrifice could begin. One of the sacrificial assistants carried a jug with lustral water and the sacrificial basket round the altar, counterclockwise, rightwards being the favorable direction. Then the sacrificer dipped his hands into the jug, as can be clearly seen on the vases. Subsequently, he took a brand from the altar, dipped it in the jug, and sprinkled and purified the participants, the altar, and the

sacrificial victim. This inaugural act separated the sacrificial participants from the rest of the population and constituted them as a distinct social group.

In Homer, Nestor starts the sacrifice with the "lustral water and the barley groats." These two elements are carried by one of his sons, and in classical times beardless sacrificial assistants can still be seen on the vases with a jug of lustral water in one hand and the sacrificial basket in the other. Only after Nestor had pronounced a prayer do other participants in the sacrifice "throw the barley groats forward." In classical times they were employed in a fashion somewhat parallel to that of the lustral water, as the barley, now mixed with salt, was sprinkled, or thrown, over the altar and the victim during the prayer. In fact, the barley groats had become so prominent that Herodotus (1.132) noted their absence from Persian sacrifice; despite their prominence, however, their meaning still remains obscure. Compared with Homer, then, the beginning of the sacrifice was considerably dramatized. This dramatization was also evident at Athenian public meetings, where at this point an officiant asked, "Who is here?" and the participants replied, "Many good men." The sacrificial prayer could be spoken by the highest magistrate but also by priests or individuals. Its content depended of course on the occasion. In Euripides' *Electra* Aegisthus prays to the nymphs to harm his enemies, and in Isaeus' oration *On the Estate of Ciron* (8.16) the grandfather prays for the health and wealth of his grandchildren. As some scholars see sacrifice as little more than a roundabout way of getting meat (see below), it is important to note that prayer was an absolutely indispensable part of sacrifice.

The kill

After these preliminaries the time has come to kill the sacrificial victim. The throwing of the barley groats has uncovered the sacrificial knife, which was lying hidden below them in the sacrificial basket. The officiant now took the knife and, as Nestor does, first cut a few hairs from the brow and threw them in the fire, the beginning of the actual killing. The gesture was such a clear indication of the coming death that quite a few representations of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Aulis show us the sacrificer cutting a lock of her hair, rather than the actual murder.

It made a difference, of course, whether a large or a small animal had to be killed. With a bovid or a large pig it was wiser to stun the victim first. In the *Odyssey* it is one of Nestor's sons who performs this act, and on the island of Keos at least it seems to have remained the duty of young men, but in classical Athens a special officiant, the "ox-slayer" (*boutypos*), was charged with delivering this blow. It is only on two non-Athenian vases that we can see an ax hovering over the head of an ox, and the instrument is never mentioned or shown in connection with the sacrificial procession, where it would have disturbed the festal atmosphere. Presumably, it was produced only at the very last minute.

The participants in the sacrifice now lifted up the (stunned) victim with its head up high, towards heaven, and a priest or another officiant cut the throat with the sacrificial knife. At this very emotional moment the pipes stayed silent but the women present raised their high, piercing cry or *ololygē*, which Aeschylus in the *Seven Against Thebes* (269) refers to as the "Greek custom of the sacrifice-cry" (*ololygmos*). The cry poses two questions which are hard to answer. First, why was it raised by women and, secondly, what did it mean? In the *Odyssey* Eurykleia wants to

shout the cry from joy when she sees the suitors killed (22.408, 411), and in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (595) Clytaemnestra raises the *ololygē* as a cry of jubilation. This seems indeed to be the most natural interpretation in connection with sacrifice. Admittedly, the piercing character of the cry also made it suitable for other occasions, such as lamentation or Dionysiac ritual, but originally it will have been a cry at the moment that the tension was broken. As the males were busy with the actual sacrifice, it is perhaps understandable that the women played a more vocal part. In any case, the custom lasted well into hellenistic times because a "piper and an *ololyktria*" were still employed during sacrifices to Athena in Pergamum in the second century BC.

Great care was taken not to spill the blood of the victim on the ground. When the animal was small, it was held over the altar and its blood blackened the altar itself or was allowed to drip onto a hearth or in a sacrificial pit; for larger animals, a bowl (*sphageion*) was used to catch the blood first. In Homer the blood is not mentioned, only the bowl (*Odyssey* 3.444), but in the classical period the blood is prominently present on the altars, as many vase-paintings show: the lasting proof of the otherwise perishable gifts to the gods.

It was now time to skin the victim and carve it up. Whatever the local differences, it seems clear that in this phase the gods were the main objects of attention, even though their share was not very impressive. After the two thigh-bones had been taken out and all meat removed from them, they were wrapped in a fold of fat, small pieces "from all the limbs" were placed on top, and the whole was burned as an offering to the gods. In later times, the latter part of the ritual is only rarely mentioned and it had probably fallen into disuse in most places, but the removal of the thigh-bones has left archaeological traces, since in Ephesus deposits of burnt thigh-bones have been found, whereas in Samos these proved to be absent among all the bones found: evidently, they were buried elsewhere. Homer interpreted the small pieces on top as a first-fruit offering (*Odyssey* 14.428), but historical and anthropological comparison shows that these acts reproduce age-old customs of hunters. By gathering the bones the sacrificers symbolically returned the animal to the god(s) to ensure future success in the hunt.

In addition to the thigh-bones, the gods also received some other parts, such as the gall bladder and the tail. Athenian vases often represent the tail of the sacrificial victim burning on a high altar and, like the thigh-bones, the tail-bones are lacking among the bones found in the sanctuary of Artemis at Kalapodi and the Heraion of Samos. Understandably, ancient comedy made fun of this "important" present to the gods. Is it perhaps the poor quality of these gifts which led to their being reinterpreted in later times and to the tail and gall bladder being used for divination (see Chapter 9)?

In classical times the gods also seem to have received a share of the innards, *splanchna*, in which the Greeks included the spleen, kidneys, liver, and, probably, the heart and lungs. These parts of the victim were the first to be eaten. This preliminary consumption also belonged to the inheritance from the hunting peoples, who presented the innards often only to a select group or the gods. It was not that different among the Greeks, since Nestor's son presents a share of the entrails to Telemachus and the disguised Athena on their arrival in Pylos (*Odyssey* 3.40–4). Many vases show a boy, the *splanchnoptēs*, holding the innards on long (sometimes 165 cm) spits, *obeloi*, roasting them over the fire. The meat sometimes went together with the

pelanos, a kind of cake, which had apparently been brought along in the sacrificial basket, often shown standing next to the burning altar. The close connection of *obeloi* and *pelanos* also appears from the fact that both developed into terms for money, without us knowing exactly how or why. Together with the food, the gods received a libation of mixed wine, just as the humans combined food with drink. Athenian vases often portray the sacrificer pouring a libation from a cup in his right hand, while he extends his left hand in a gesture of prayer. The custom was traditional, since Nestor also performs a libation, although he says a prayer before sacrificing (above).

After these preliminary acts, the actual carving of the victim was continued. This was a complicated affair, which in classical times was entrusted to a specialist "butcher," the *mageiros*. Various vases show chunks of meat hanging in the trees: testimony to the pleasure that was taken in the display of the meat. After the carving, the meat had to be boiled before it was distributed; archaeologists have even dug up supports for the ancient cauldrons in which the meat had to simmer. The act of distribution was so important that the Homeric term used for banquet, *dais*, is etymologically connected with the root **da* "divide, allot." However, distribution must have created big problems in the first instance, as not all meat is of the same quality or easily cut into exactly similar portions. In Homer, we often find the combination phrase *dais eïsē*, "an equal feast," but this expression should not be taken to mean that everybody always received an equal share. On the contrary. In the strongly hierarchical Homeric society, meat was distributed depending on the rank and status of the guests. Typical in this respect are the scenes in the *Odyssey* in which Eumaios offers the chine of a pig to Odysseus (14.437), and those in the *Iliad*, where Agamemnon offers a prime cut, the chine complete with ribs, to Ajax, although the feast is explicitly called a *dais eïsē* (7.320–2). Evidently, the ideology of equality did not exclude unequal distribution in the case of special persons or special merits. In fact, unequal distribution lasted well into classical times, since in Sparta the chine was offered to the kings; in Crete the best pieces were given to the bravest and the wisest, and in democratic Athens a decree of around 335 BC ordered the officials in charge of the sacrifices during the Lesser Panathenaea to give special portions to the *prytaneis*, *archons*, *stratēgoi*, and other officials. On the other hand, the ideology of equal distribution also remained alive, and in hellenistic Sinuri the portions of meat had to be weighed before distribution.

The importance of the distribution also appears in a different way. The names of the most important gods of fate, Moira and Aisa (related to Oscan *aeteis*, "part"), are also words meaning "portion." The name of Ker, "Death," the god connected with man's definitive fate, is probably related to *keirō*, "to cut," and the Greeks usually blamed a *daimōn*, literally "distributor," for sudden and malevolent interference. The Greeks apparently derived their ideas about fate from sacrifice, *the* occasion in life where portions were cut and distributed. Even the later Greek word for "law, order," *nomos*, literally means "dispensation"; originally, it may have meant the right order of sacrificial distribution. Evidently, the importance of sacrifice for early Greece can hardly be overrated.

After the distribution of the meat the meal could start. In Greek literature, division and distribution of meat is regularly described in detail, but its consumption is hardly ever mentioned. Similarly, vases never show anyone eating, although the various phases of sacrifice are often represented.

The Significance of Sacrifice: The Insider's Perspective

Having seen that not every sacrifice in Greece ended with the consumption of meat, we can now turn to problems of meaning and history. Rather strikingly, modern studies rarely take the Greeks' own reflections about sacrifice fully into account. Admittedly, these are sometimes naive and transpose structural differences into a chronological, mythological system, but these interpretations have the same value as those of modern anthropological informants and can only be neglected at our peril. As anthropologists stress, we must distinguish "experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts, but it is only their concerted application which will truly illuminate the beliefs and practices of a given society. So we will now look at (1) what literary sources implicitly say about the nature and function of sacrifice, (2) the explicit reflection of Theophrastus, and, last but not least, (3) the myths connected with sacrifice.

Let us start with the literary sources. It would transcend the scope of this chapter to analyze all sacrifices in literary texts, but some observations can be made. Regarding the nature of sacrifice, epic and tragedy show it to have been an extremely holy affair, of which the proper performance was indicative of a man's relationship with the gods. In the third book of the *Odyssey* Homer clearly wants to stress the piety of Nestor by depicting him as engaged in sacrifice when Telemachus arrives in Pylos. The same effect can also be achieved by contrast. In Greek tragedy perversion of the social order is repeatedly expressed through perversion of sacrifice: Euripides in particular liked to situate murders at a sacrifice or during prayer.

Regarding the function of sacrifice, early epic shows that the gods shared in hecatomb feasts with Aethiopes and Phaeacians and liked the smoke of the fat. Hesiod (fr. 1 Merkelbach-West) also mentions that the gods once shared the dinners of mortals, surely also the ones after sacrifice. Moreover, the ubiquitous feast of the Theoxenia (or Theodaisia) shows that at one time it was considered normal that the gods feasted together with the mortals; the fact that this is particularly the feast of the Dioscuri suggests an archaic tradition in this respect. Yet the archaic Greeks had already come to feel uneasy about the gods eating in the same manner as the mortals. When Athena attends the sacrifice of Nestor, Homer says only that the goddess came "to meet the offering" (*Odyssey* 3.435), as he clearly felt uneasy picturing her feeding on the sacrifice. In fact, Homer progressively removed the most carnal aspects of the Olympian pantheon, and the other Greeks followed his lead.

This strategy of "decarnalizing" the gods proved to be very successful, and the aspect of divine food no longer receives any mention in the discussion of sacrifice by Theophrastus. According to this scholar, "there are three reasons one ought to sacrifice to the gods: either on account of honor or on account of gratitude or on account of a want of things. For just as with good men, so also with these (the gods) we think that offerings of first-fruits should be made to them. We honour the gods either because we seek to deflect evils or to acquire goods for ourselves, or because we have first been treated well or simply to do great honour to their good character" (fr. 584A, tr. Fortenbaugh et al.). All three reasons adduced by Theophrastus – honor, gratitude, want of things – can be found among the earlier Greeks. Honor was clearly a most important factor in sacrifice, as appears from a number of myths.

Homer (*Iliad* 9.534–6) mentions that the Calydonian hunt was occasioned by Oeneus' omission of Artemis from a sacrifice to all the gods, just as, according to Stesichorus (fr. 223 *PMG*/Campbell), Tyndareus once forgot to include Aphrodite; this angered the goddess to such an extent that she made his daughters Helen and Clytaemnestra desert or deceive their husbands: in other words, Tyndareus' omission eventually led to the Trojan War. Finally, Hera's anger at Pelias for not having been honored prompted the expedition of the Argonauts (Apollonius of Rhodes 1.14; Apollodorus, *Library* 1.9.16). In short, the great panhellenic expeditions were all occasioned by sacrificial omissions. It is hard to see how the aspect of honor could have been expressed more forcefully by the Greeks.

Gratitude is also present as a motif in Homer. After Odysseus has escaped from the cave of the Cyclops Polyphemus, he sacrifices the ram under which he made his escape to Zeus, clearly as a sign of gratitude, even though it was not accepted by Zeus (*Odyssey* 9.551–5). Finally, it is clear that sacrifice was sometimes made in a utilitarian state of mind or used as an argument to persuade the gods to do something. When Chryses beseeches Apollo that he might recover his daughter Chryseis, he makes the request "fulfill me this wish, if I ever burned for you the fat thigh-bones of bulls and goats" (1.39–41). In fact, it is clear that punctiliousness in sacrificing was supposed to have created an obligation on the part of the gods to treat human donors well, as is illustrated by the reaction of Zeus, who nearly saves Hector on account of his many sacrifices (*Iliad* 22.170–2).

Finally, what did the collective imagination as expressed in myth single out as significant? The best-known myth of sacrifice occurs in Hesiod's *Theogony* (535–61), which connects the origin of sacrifice with the invention of fire and the creation of woman. In order to settle a quarrel between gods and mortals, Prometheus took refuge in a trick. He let Zeus choose between, on the one hand, the flesh and fatty entrails of a slaughtered bull and, on the other, the worthless white bones disguised inside glistening fat. Zeus was not fooled but knowingly opted for the bones instead of the desirable flesh, and "since then the race of men on earth burn white bones for the immortals on smoking altars." Hesiod situates this event at the time that men and the gods were settling their dispute at Mekone on the Peloponnese. In other words, he has reworked a local myth, which originally had nothing to do with the procurement of fire and the creation of women. Apparently, the original myth was aetiological in intent and aimed at explaining the strange gift of the "white bones." Moreover, in this earlier version Zeus must have been really duped, as Hesiod all too clearly wants to rescue his prestige and omniscience. But whatever this earlier version was, Hesiod's account clearly locates the origin of sacrifice at the precise moment that gods and mortals were in the process of parting their common ways. Sacrifice was *the* pre-eminent act of the "condition humaine," which definitively established and continued the present world order, in which men die and immortals have to be worshiped.

This significance of sacrifice also appears from other local myths. The mythographer Apollodorus (1.7.2) relates that Deucalion floated over the sea for nine days and nights, after Zeus had flooded Greece. When the rain ceased, he landed on Parnassus and sacrificed to Zeus Phyxios or, in variants of the myth, to Zeus Aphesios, Zeus Olympios, or the Twelve Gods. In all these cases the sacrifice is directed to the supreme god or the collective of the gods. The sacrifice paradigmatically expresses

human gratitude, but it also inaugurates the present world order, as subsequently humanity was created. For the Greeks, then, sacrifice ordered the correct relationship between man and his gods, but it did not mark the place of man between gods and animals, as the French structuralists in particular have claimed.

The Significance of Sacrifice: The Perspective of Outsiders

The best modern students of Greek religion have produced rather different interpretations of the origin, function, and significance of the central act of sacrifice, the kill. Having looked in detail at the ritual, its commentators, and its myths, we are now in a better position to evaluate these views. Appropriately, we will start with the Swiss scholar Karl Meuli (1891–1968), who did most to enhance our understanding of the origin of Greek sacrifice. Meuli was a brilliant folklorist and classicist, who combined profound erudition with bold speculation. In his analysis of Greek sacrifice, he stressed that the Olympic (normative) sacrifice was nothing but ritual slaughter, to which the gods were latecomers. Moreover, this ritual slaughter found its closest analogs in the slaughter and sacrificial ritual of Asian shepherds, who derived their customs straight from their hunting ancestors. Although there is some truth in these propositions, they can not be accepted in their totality.

Let us start with the positive side. Meuli's investigation has shown that many details, such as the burning of small pieces of meat, the tasting of the innards, and the traditional way of cutting up the victim, are extremely old and must go back to pre-agricultural times. On the other hand, the "hunting connection" does not explain everything. The throwing of grains of corn on the victim evidently does not derive from hunting habits, nor can the burning of the thigh-bones be paralleled in the customs of early hunters; in fact, burnt offering in Greece clearly originated in Syro-Palestine and did not derive from a straightforward tradition that had been maintained by the proto-Greeks. Moreover, unlike real hunting tribes who sometimes returned all the bones to a Lady (or Lord) of the Animals, the Greeks offered only a few bones to the gods. And again unlike hunting tribes, they broke the bones to extract the marrow, as the excavations in Samos, Didyma, and Kalapodi have shown. In this respect they had moved away further from their hunting ancestors than the early Indians and the Jews: the Old Testament forbids the breaking of the bones.

Meuli also neglected some obvious differences between the hunt and sacrifice. Although hunters often follow certain ritual prescriptions, especially when preparing themselves, the hunt itself is a profane activity, unlike sacrifice. It is true that our literary accounts do not insist very much on the connection of sacrifice with specific gods, nor do sacrificial scenes on vases depict gods as often as we would expect, but there can be no doubt about the fact that sacrifice was considered a very holy affair by the Greeks.

Taking Meuli's views on the continuity between hunt and sacrifice as his point of departure, Walter Burkert (1931–) has refined and expanded this picture in various ways. From his many observations on sacrifice I would like to note here three aspects. First, Burkert stresses the role of ritual in the preservation of hunting rites during the

enormous span of time that man (not woman) has been a hunter, and the prestige that hunting and the eating of meat has carried virtually until the present day; he also notes that the excavation of the Anatolian town of Catal Hüyük (6000 BC) enables us to observe the gradual transition from hunt to sacrifice. Secondly, Burkert argues that participation in aggression unites a community; sacrifice thus helps the continuation of society. Thirdly, following Meuli, who stressed that the hunters felt guilty for having killed their game and regularly tried to disclaim responsibility, Burkert has made this feeling of guilt the focus of his sacrificial theory. His star witness is the Dipolieia, an Athenian festival during which an ox was sacrificed because it had tasted from the sacrificial cakes. Subsequently the sacrificial knife was condemned and expelled from the city, but the ox was ritually re-erected, yoked to a plough. In the aetiological myth the killer of the ox eased his conscience by suggesting that everybody should partake in the killing of the sacrificial victim. This "comedy of innocence," which disclaimed responsibility for the sacrificial killing by putting the blame on the ox itself and the knife, is taken by Burkert to be paradigmatic for every sacrifice: humans experience *Angst* when actually killing the animals and have feelings of guilt over the blood which they have shed.

Burkert's observations focus our attention on important aspects of Greek sacrifice, and his views on the role of ritual in the tradition of hunting customs go a long way towards solving the problem of how various ritual details managed to survive the transition from hunting via shepherding into agriculture. We may perhaps add that practices and beliefs of hunters seem to be very persistent. Many of the parallels observed by Meuli derive from modern descriptions of Siberian and Arctic peoples, and clear traces of the belief in a Lady (or Lord) of the Animals, to whom the hunters dedicated the bones of their game, survived in western Europe even into the twentieth century. As the hunt takes place in the wild outside society and civilization, its practices are perhaps less susceptible to quick changes. Moreover, its high prestige, even among pastoralists and farmers, may explain the survival of some of its customs across profound changes in social structures.

On the other hand, Burkert's observations on the role of bloodshed in the evocation of *Angst* and guilt cannot be accepted in their totality. The main problem here is the virtually total lack of testimonies of actual fear and guilt among the Greeks. On the contrary, Attic vases constantly connect sacrifice with ideas of festivity, celebrations, and blessings. The ritual of the Dipolieia can not make up for this absence, since it constitutes a very special case. The existence of a month named Bouphonion, "Ox-Killing," on Euboea, its colonies, and adjacent islands suggests a ritual of great antiquity but limited circulation. In its attested form, however, the ritual is actually rather late, since it presupposes the developed Attic rules of justice. Moreover, as the ritual shows, the protagonist of the sacrificial happening was a plough-ox, which it was a crime to kill at Athens. Consequently, we should not generalize from this particular sacrificial ritual to a general view of killing in Greek sacrifice.

Finally, in explicit opposition to Meuli and Burkert, Jean-Pierre Vernant (1914–) has argued two important points. First, Greek sacrificial rites should not be compared with hunting rituals but resituated within their proper religious, Greek system and, second, the killing of the victim is organized in such a way that it is unequivocally distinguished from murder and violence seems excluded. Regarding the first point,

Vernant and his pupils have indeed successfully analyzed the ideological presuppositions of Greek sacrifice, in particular its political significance as manifested by the Orphics' and Pythagoreans' refusal of sacrifice, that is to say, by groups which operated in clear opposition to the values of the polis. Vernant's équipe has also succeeded in bringing out the importance of studying the representations of sacrifice on Greek vases for a more profound understanding of its significance.

Much less persuasive is Vernant's attack on Burkert's interpretation of the kill and its corresponding unease as the center of gravity of sacrifice. He notes himself that rituals, myths, and representations are all painfully careful in avoiding any reference to the actual killing of the sacrificial victim (cf. Chapter 26 in this volume). In this way the Greeks tried to exclude the elements of violence and *sauvagerie* from their sacrifice in order to differentiate it from murder. His main arguments for this thesis are twofold. First, if the Greeks really felt uneasy about animal sacrifice, they should have also objected to the representation of human sacrifice. But when in archaic Greek vase-painting Polyxena is killed over the altar, we see her blood spurting, although we never see that of cows or sheep. Second, Vernant states that he refuses to impose a meaning on sacrifice different from the one explicitly given by the Greeks. Both these arguments are hardly convincing. Where would social anthropology or sociology be if they accepted only meanings explicitly mentioned by societies? But Vernant's first argument is hardly persuasive either. Representations of human sacrifice concern only mythological figures and are meant to suggest a monstrous offering, not a pleasing gift.

History and Function of Greek Sacrifice

What then have we learned about the history and function of Greek sacrifice? Sacrifice does not occur among "primitive" hunting peoples, but it seems to have originated with the domestication of animals. Consequently, Aegean sacrifice cannot be much older than the seventh or eighth millennium BC. On the other hand, in killing and processing their victims the former hunters kept, naturally, some of their hunting customs and techniques, as Meuli's investigations have convincingly shown. It remains difficult, however, to define the development of Greek sacrifice more precisely in time, since the early Indo-Europeans did not have a specific term for "sacrifice." Consequently, we have little information about the sacrificial rites which the proto-Greeks practiced before they invaded Greece, probably at the beginning of the second millennium. We are also badly informed about the state of sacrifice that the Indo-European invaders encountered in Greece. We cannot even be sure that the Minoans practiced burnt-animal sacrifice. It is only in Homer that we find the first detailed descriptions of normative animal sacrifice, but although his description is rather formulaic, it does not look that old. Greek sacrificial practice, then, seems to have received its more definitive form only relatively late.

The chronology of sacrifice does not, of course, explain the reason(s) for its origin. Comparison with pastoralist tribes suggests that domesticated animals were considered so valuable for the nourishment of the community that they could be eaten only under the restraints of a ritual context. Once these restrictions were introduced, wild animals must have been considered no longer valuable enough to be offered to the

gods and, consequently, they were excluded from sacrifice, although exceptions remained possible. In Artemis' sanctuary at Kalapodi, excavators have found bones of boars and deer; the latter have also come to light in the Theban Kabirion and the Samian Heraion. Epigraphical sources, such as sacrificial calendars, never mention or prescribe wild animals, and a possible explanation for the finds would be to postulate an origin in a successful hunt. Yet we have at least one literary testimony for the sacrifice of a wild animal: in the *Cypria*, Artemis substitutes a deer to be sacrificed in place of Iphigeneia. We may also observe that in ancient Israel, where, as in Greece, cattle, sheep, and goats constituted the normal sacrificial victims, excavations have demonstrated incidental sacrifices of fallow deer. Evidently there were sometimes fuzzy edges at the boundaries of the accepted sacrificial victims in order to include the most popular game.

If for the Greeks themselves the primary aim of sacrifice was communication with the gods, their "primitive" way of doing so remains curiously hard to accept for modern interpreters. For Meuli sacrifice was nothing but ritual slaughter, for Burkert the shared aggression of the sacrificial killing primarily led to the founding of a community, and for Vernant sacrifice was, fundamentally, killing for eating. Rather striking in these modern explanations is the "secular," reductionist approach, which does not take into account the explicit aims of the Greeks and tries to reduce sacrifice to one clear formula. It is absolutely true that sacrifice is ritual slaughter, does constitute a community, and is killing for eating, but, as I hope to have shown, it is similarly true that sacrifice is much more than that. It is also an occasion for the display of physical strength, for displaying one's status, for having a nice dinner, for demonstrating the boundaries of the group, and, above all, for approaching the gods. A ritual act that stands at the very center of the community cannot but have economic, political, social, and cultural meanings, in addition to its religious significance. It will be the challenge for future analyses of Greek sacrifice to show the richness of all these meanings and not to fall into the temptation to reduce them to one formula, however attractive.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For the historical development of sacrifice see Meuli 1975:2.907–1021 and J.Z. Smith 1987:202–5. For step-by-step accounts see Van Straten 1995, Bowie 1995, Bremmer 1996:248–83 (from which this chapter is adapted), and Himmelmann 1997. For the vocabulary of sacrifice see Casabona 1966, and for the economic aspects Jameson 1988. Burkert 1983 is a classic study of the role of sacrifice in Greek myth, ritual, and society. The best introduction to the views of Vernant and his Parisian colleagues is Detienne and Vernant 1979, but see also the "second thoughts" of the younger generation: Georgoudi, Koch-Piettre, and Schmidt 2005. For new ideas about sacrifice to heroes and chthonian gods see Ekroth 2002, and Hägg and Alroth 2005.

CHAPTER NINE

Divination

Pierre Bonnechere

Man has always tried to interrogate the gods. Only they in their omniscience can tell him things hidden and inaccessible to his finite intellect. All forms of such interrogation, in the broad sense, fall under the category of divination, *mantikē* in Greek and *divinatio* in Latin. The relevant sources from all parts of the Mediterranean occupied by the Greeks are so many and varied that no there has been no up-to-date synthesis on this complex subject, which is bound up with all spheres of Greek thought, from philosophy to politics and from poetry to medicine (Bouché-Leclercq 1879–82).

Divination in the Greek Mind

Contrary to general belief, the purpose of divination was not simply to "know the future." Extant oracular responses almost all bear upon the clarification of a specific point, present, future, or past (*Iliad* 1.69–70), of concern to the consultant. In a world in which the smallest error could prove fatal, man depended upon divination to act in the most effective way when confronted with an immediate choice entailing unknown and thus potentially harrowing repercussions (Jouan 1991).

The Greeks made no distinction in their lives between the sacred and the profane, be it in the sphere of the family, the community, or the city, and accordingly favored frequent contact with the gods. The general goodwill of the gods was solicited through festivals, purifications, thanksgivings, prayers, sacrifices and offerings, dances and hymns, and prescriptions of all sorts in sanctuaries and competitions. But other rites were more focused and called for action from the gods in direct response: magic, mystery cults, and divination, through which one could encounter the god in a personal fashion and even fuse with him.

Divination is one form of access to divine revelation amongst many others. In Greece, knowledge, feelings, and in fact every natural or cultural efflorescence

were inspired by the gods: agriculture was revealed by Demeter; the techniques and the discoveries associated with the intellect were the work of Athena; the inspiration of love derived from Aphrodite and Eros; medical knowledge was the work of healing deities. Rites themselves were dictated by the gods, just as was the secret of the mysteries. Philosophy did not lag behind. Just like the other Presocratics, Pythagoras was regarded as being as truthful as the Delphic oracle (Aristippos 4 A 150 Giannantoni), Parmenides derived his knowledge from a goddess (fr. 1 DK), and the cult that Plato offered to the Muses in the garden of the Academy was far from accidental (Motte 1973:411–29; Schefer 2002). Socrates had said: "I am a soothsayer" (Plato *Phaedrus* 292c), and Pindar had proclaimed, "Pronounce your oracles, Muse, I will be the prophet" (fr. 150 Maehler). Oracular and poetic forms of knowledge, similar as they were, were inspired by Apollo and the Muses, and they often came from the bottom of a cave (Duchemin 1955:21–94; Ustinova 2004).

The notion of revelation was of central importance to Greek religion, but not in a Judeo-Christian sense. Men who wished to conform with the will of the gods, for fear of incurring their wrath otherwise, found help in divine signs. The proliferation of diviners and of oracle collections is tangible proof of this in a society without revealed books such as the Bible. Again, it is important to understand that archaic poets, who were always considered to be the religious initiators of hellenism and to some extent its prophets, were held to be inspired by the gods (Xenophanes fr. 11 D-K). This tendency was so strong that, whenever one stressed the "immorality" of the Homeric or Orphic gods, one immediately promoted an allegorical reading of them, right up until the end of ancient thought. Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, and even a late collection of texts, the Chaldaean Oracles, for example, were seen as the varied expression of one single and unique revealed truth (Brisson 1996).

Divination in Greece was therefore far from an unreasonable, irrational outgrowth from "rational" Greek thought. Already in the archaic period all its procedures were in place or in gestation, and well integrated into Greek patterns of thought. The gods agreed to communicate some of their absolute knowledge with men, and divination was simply one privileged means of enabling this. This involved an analogical way of thinking that presupposed a certain sense of predestination: in myth, no matter how man tries to evade a prediction, it will always come to pass (*Iliad* 16.441–2; Xenophon *Anabasis* 7.8.8–22; Moreau 1991). In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (247–93) the young god himself declares his intention of giving men his rulings, which express the will of Zeus. Almost all gods and numerous heroes had their oracle somewhere, but Apollo was without contest *the* god of divination.

Like every form of contact with the sacred, divination involves an emotional response on the consultant's part, and this can vary according to context and to the sensitivity and education of each individual (e.g., Thucydides 6.70.1). The consultation of an oracle can be a hypocritical act or it can express an intensely genuine piety. A distinction can moreover be made between the active and passive role of the oracle's beneficiary. Men can ask for a sign and get it, or they can receive a spontaneous sign (Plutarch, *Themistocles* 13.2–5). Entering an oracular sanctuary obviously requires an active role. Dreams could impose themselves on a dreamer in his home, or in a sanctuary that specialized in oniromancy (divination by dreams).

Between Truth and Lie: The Ambiguity of Oracles

The reputation of some oracular sanctuaries endured for a thousand years, and this demonstrates that the Greeks believed in oracles and warning signs. Many inscriptions record acts done "in accordance with the will of an oracle," confirming the literary tradition (e.g., *IG* i^3 40, 64–7), and examples of people disobeying oracles they have been given are exceptional (Herodotus 7.148–9). The skeptical Thucydides – and in his wake Polybius (36.17) – never doubted the authority of the Delphic oracle, even if he emphasizes the frequent manipulations of the prophecies given, and the consequences of this on the course of events (Marinatos 1981:47–55). Plato, as a good pupil of Socrates, was of the same view, and very few and far between were those who denied the principle of divination, such as Xenophanes and then the Epicureans. In the Peace of Nicias of 421, the first clause of the treaty specified free access to Delphi for the opponents (Thucydides 5.18.2).

That said, three substantial and related problems confronted the Greeks: (1) the ambiguity of oracles; (2) charlatanism; and (3) the forgery of oracular responses.

1 The ambiguity of oracles derived from two things: the mode of revelation itself and errors made in the process of prediction. The cry of an owl, heard on the left, a dream, or the words of the Pythia at Delphi are naturally vague and always leave room for doubt and interpretation (Heraclitus fr. 93 D-K). The medium too, a finite human being, was an inadequate instrument for authentic revelation (Plutarch, *Pythian Oracles* 404b–405a). As for erroneous predictions, unless one actually believes in Apollo, one must admit a real percentage of error. But the Greeks could not consider their gods liars. The reconciliation of this contradiction entailed accepting the possibility of human error in the decoding of oracles: the responses of the gods, truthfully spoken, were accordingly considered ambiguous, "oblique." Sophocles' Oedipus does not understand the oracles and becomes embroiled in misfortune. Herodotus' Croesus (1.46–91) is told by the Pythia that if he takes up war against Persia he will destroy a great empire. In his defeat he destroys his own kingdom. Human error was the only possible explanation from the moment that belief in divination became fixed in Greek patterns of thought and was justified by tradition, which the Greeks seldom deviated from (Isocrates, *Areopagiticus* 30). Accordingly, ambiguity soon became established as the hallmark of oracles in literature, even though epigraphic cases are quite rare (Fontenrose 1978:236; Lane Fox 1997:250–4).
2 On top of error came charlatanism. Prediction was trustworthy, but some predictions were more trustworthy than others. First in rank came the infallible oracles, whose power was guaranteed by their antiquity: Delphi, Dodona, Olympia, Siwah, then Claros and Didyma, amongst others. Faith in oracles was confirmed by the – legendary – punishment inflicted upon Croesus, who tested them to ensure their truthfulness (Herodotus 1.46.2–1.48.1). Also reliable were the oracles that offered a personal contact, an "autopsy," with the divinity, a characteristic that was an ancient one, but one that became essential in the hellenistic period.

By contrast, at the bottom end of the divination scale languished itinerant diviners, interpreters of oracle collections gathered under the name of the great seers of the past, such as Musaeus, Orpheus, or Bakis, the content of which evolved to meet the needs of each age (Bowden 2003; Sordi 1993). Aristophanes, Euripides, and Sophocles, as well as Thucydides, Plato, and the Cynic Diogenes, not to mention Artemidorus, the expert in the interpretation of dreams, all alike reviled them, which is proof enough of their success with the masses. Since they needed to live by their craft, they often found themselves with conflicting interests.

Between these two extremes fell a myriad of local divinatory institutions – Boeotia alone had more than ten of them – as well as publicly recognized diviners in the service of the city or of armies (e.g., *IG* i^3 1147, lines 128–9, ca. 460 BC). Divinatory rituals were essential prior to combat. The city of Athens awarded a crown to the diviner Cleobulus, the uncle of Aeschines, for his services during the campaign against Chilon (Aeschines, *On the Embassy* 78; *Bull.* 1958, 217 [Robert]). When he was on campaign Xenophon, a witness representative of many learned Greeks, accepted the significance of signs, whatever they were, without raising an eyebrow (e.g., *Cyropaedia* 1.6.1–4), and often sacrificed to obtain omens (but he also denounced a diviner who acted to his own advantage: *Anabasis* 5.6.16–34).

From the time of Homer (*Odyssey* 2.181–2) Greek thought was divided between unshakeable faith in divination and developing skepticism. In criticizing Calchas and Helenus, who should have seen things that they had not, and in rejecting certain types of divination, the messenger of Euripides' *Helen* (744–57; cf. *Electra* 399–400) is representative of a trend (his ideas recur at Thucydides 8.1, where the crowd reproach the diviners for their misleading advice after the Sicilian disaster): "Reason," he concludes, "is a better diviner, as is soundness of judgment." Euripides is difficult to use, because the prophecies that are most heavily criticized in his works come to pass against all expectation (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 570–5). But the lively debates that divided the Greek elites emerge clearly from an inscription dedicated to the dead of the battle of Coronea, shortly after 446 BC: the Athenian general appears to have acted in spite of an unfavorable sign, thereby demonstrating the authenticity of oracles, for all that some held them in disdain (Hansen 1983:5).

This curious mixture of unshakeable faith and skepticism could often be found within the same individual. Once the principle of divination had been accepted, one tried to limit the possibilities of abuse or error. As with Croesus in the legend, the Greeks posed their questions in such a form as to reduce ambiguous factors to the minimum. Xenophon asked at Delphi not whether he should join Cyrus' expedition, but to which gods he should sacrifice to make a success of it (*Anabasis* 3.1.4–7). The Corcyreans asked at Dodona what gods they should worship in order to maintain harmony (Parke 1967:260, nos. 2–3). The response to this kind of question is never false. The prophet-interpreters could perhaps shape the god's responses, but the consultants acted in the same way, by presenting their question in the form of an indirect inquiry: "Cleoutas asks Zeus and Dione if it is profitable and advantageous for him to rear sheep" (*Syll.*^{3} 1165).

Both sides, unawares, refined a system of consultation that justified the truthfulness of oracles whilst allaying people's anxiety. Thus, the responses to a question of the type according to which one wishes "to know *whether* one should cultivate the land" will be 100 percent valid, because one will never know what

the course of action dismissed by the Pythia would have brought. The response to a question of the sort "*whether* one will marry" is more critical. But across the board erroneous responses could not be expected to have exceeded 50 percent. The oracles accordingly responded in satisfactory fashion to at least 75 percent of questions with "whether." In other cases, where the oracle responded, for example, with a riddle, the answer was deduced by the consultant himself, with a risk that any error could imputed to him (Parker 1985:79–80).

Next, the consultant often triangulated his inquiry to glean further indications and to form a more credible convergence: a dream could be confirmed by another dream, a prodigy by the examination of a victim's entrails, or by a coincidence (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 6.5.2). And at the heart of mantic rituals, several divinatory sacrifices sanctioned the god's good disposition towards the petitioner. Numerous instances, legendary and historical, display the confirmation of one oracle by another: thus in 388 BC King Agesipolis, having obtained a favorable oracle at Olympia, protected himself by obtaining an analogous response from Delphi before invading the Argolid (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.7.1–3).

3 This mixture of credulity and reason brings us to the counterfeiting or falsification of oracles. An improbable number of historical events were predicted by oracles that are today cataloged in literary sources: unless we believe in the percipience of the Greek gods, an enormous majority were responses forged after the fact, or *post eventum*, as we say. It must be stated frankly that these texts are bogus, and constitute one of the problems the historian must deal with.

This does not mean that these texts are without interest. Quite the reverse. The Greeks, first of all, regarded them as authentic, and they therefore exerted a historical impact. Further, these *post eventum* oracles tell us about the patterns of thought of the period that invented and disseminated them. Whether they were put into circulation by the sanctuaries themselves, or with their approval, or simply without them being able to do anything about them, these bogus oracles were not so much designed to deceive as to demonstrate the supreme oracular power of the gods. To this extent, the 500 or so Delphic responses cataloged are less valuable for their historicity than for the image they present, reinforcing the idea that the Greeks wanted to project of their principal oracle (Maurizio 1998). One often reads in modern scholarship that the Pythia colluded with the powers of the day: we will return to this claim.

In an oral society, bogus oracles could immediately present themselves as authentic soon after the event, and it is not necessary to see in them the result of interested calculation. They should rather be compared with myths that offer infinite possibilities of adaptation to the social needs of the moment (e.g., Fontenrose 1978:124–8). Thucydides shows this phenomenon at work during the plague of 430 BC: "people naturally turned to their memories, recalling the verse that the oldest people said had been recited previously: 'A Dorian war will be seen to arrive, and with it the plague.' In fact, there was disagreement. The word that featured in the verse, it was contended, had not been *loimos* [plague] but *limos* [famine]. However, the view that naturally prevailed was that the word had been "plague." People thus conditioned their memories in accordance with what happened; and if, I imagine, another Dorian war presents

itself after this one and there is a famine in it, it is naturally under this form that they will make the quotation'' (2.54.1–3).

The Two Main Types of Divination

Two main types of divination are usually distinguished. *Inductive divination* is based on the interpretation of signs, as in the flight of birds, which the gods have sowed in the universe to enable men to decode them. *Inspired divination* was delivered by prophets and prophetesses whose minds were seized directly by the gods. Inductive divination took place wherever one had need of it, from the field of battle to the *ecclēsia*. Inspired divination was more tied to a sanctuary (*chrēstērion*, *manteion*). Often, the ancients devalued the first type in favor of the second.

Divinely inspired speech, just like the divine sign, needed exegetes who worked on the basis of intuition, which is mocked by Cicero (*On Divination* 2.30.63–5), but also within the framework of a logical, empirical, and associative process. The difficulty of this quasi-scientific approach for the believers – but for us the squaring of the circle – was increased by the varying context of each revelation, which could alter its significance. An earthquake occurred: King Agis, at the frontier with Argos, decided to return to Sparta. But in 388 BC Agesipolis was already in Argive territory and interpreted the earthquake as a favorable omen (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.7.1–3). And an identical dream gave rise to seven different futures (Artemidorus 4.67).

Inductive divination

Inductive divination identifies and decodes the well-known signs disseminated across the world by the gods and rests upon the analogical pattern of thought, inscribed into the heart of man, that wants the things down here, the microcosm, to reflect the world above, the macrocosm. Some people were more sensitive to the perception of signs and their meanings than others. To disentangle the skein of causal connections, one had recourse to a specialist, usually termed *mantis*, in opposition to *prophētēs*, or a specialist in inspired divination. Each type of sign could have its own specialist diviners (Bayet 1936; Scarpi 1998).

Striking and surprising events – *prodigies* – are known to us from a number of examples of doubtful authenticity, but which reveal the underlying pattern of thought. Thus Herodotus speaks of statues sweating on the Acropolis at the approach of the Persians or of a priestess who grew a beard when her city, Pedasa, was threatened (7.140, 1.75). Celestial and natural phenomena, such as eclipses and comets (Pindar, *Paeans* 9) were amongst the most troubling signs, especially if they were unexpected, like rain or lightning from a clear sky (Demosthenes 43 [*Against Macartatos*] 66). Intellectuals, such as the Stoics, paid sustained attention here (Kany-Turpin 2003). The lightning bolt and thunder are the supreme signs of Zeus. Earthquakes and tsunamis, signs of Poseidon, were so terrifying as to compel armies to retreat (Cusset 2003; Lebeau 2003).

Relevant here too is the behavior of animals. The majority belonged to a god – the eagle of Zeus, the crow of Apollo, the doe of Artemis – and all could become a divine tool: a weasel on the road, an owl that hoots, a snake that disappears (Amiotti 1998;

Bodson 1978). Many cities and sanctuaries, it was said, were founded in a place indicated by an animal-guide (cf. Euripides, *Phoenissae* 638–44). Even in sacrificial ritual the animal had to display its acceptance of being sacrificed, whether this was by trembling or by curving its spine (Aristophanes, *Peace* 960). Snakes, with a venom that was sometimes lethal, lived in the crevices of the earth, and they were held to be immortal because of their slough: they were natural emissaries of the chthonic world, present in chthonic oracles and sanctuaries and also in the decorations of tombs (Bodson 1978:68–71).

Omens drawn from birds – ornithomancy – already occupied a fundamental place on some archaic vases and in Homer (*Odyssey* 15.154–81) and Hesiod (fr. 355 Merkelbach-West; cf. West 1978 on line 82). Birds move between the earth and the purest level of the sky, the ether, the home of the gods and the Muses, not to mention souls: accordingly they are wholly suited to the role of intermediaries (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 104–59). Plutarch admirably sums this belief up, even if the practice was more complicated than the theory: "The god presses various movements upon them and draws twitterings and cries from them. Sometimes he holds them suspended, sometimes he sends them flying at high speed, either to interrupt men's actions or projects abruptly, or to help in their accomplishment" (*Intelligence of Animals* 22, 975ab). An inscription from Ephesus (*IEphesos* 5.1678), from the sixth of fifth century BC, already indicates the fundamental principles of the method based upon the opposition left/unfavorable–right/favorable. This principle was also fundamental more widely, in inductive divination (Collins 2002; Dillon 1996; Pollard 1977:116–29).

The spasms of the human body are similarly significant, and caution against or forbid an action or a project in the course of realization. These are *klēdones*, whence *cledonomancy* (Peradotto 1969). Sneezing is the best known, from Homer (*Odyssey* 17.541–8) to Plutarch (*Themistocles* 13.2–5). The *klēdōn* can also be an involuntary utterance or action (such as a fart: *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 294–6), a double entendre, or a proper name which acts as an omen, a coincidence, in fact any sign that confers a different meaning in the normal course of things (cf. Callimachus, *Epigrams* 1). Although an excessive belief in *klēdones* was considered absurdly superstitious, a reasoned approach to them was held to be appropriate: for Theophrastus, the Squalid Man "blasphemes when his mother has gone to the specialist in ornithomancy. And, amongst worshipers praying and offering a libation, he drops the cup and laughs as if the thing were a joke in good taste" (*Characters* 19.8–9). One could also provoke *klēdones* in some established oracles, such as at Pharae in Achaea, where the consultant whispered his question into the ear of the statue of Hermes and left the agora plugging his ears. Then, removing his hands, he received the response in the first voice heard (Pausanias 7.22.2–3).

Cleromancy is divination by drawing a lot. An easy method, of course, it could be used anywhere, even at Delphi (Cordano and Grottanelli 2001; S.I. Johnston 2003). It resolves a question posed in the form of an alternative and it is ideal, accordingly, for the choice between solutions in a pre-established list. Already found in Homer, cleromancy in a broad sense extended to the level of the city itself, in the case of Athens, which chose its magistrates in this way, with the exception of *stratēgoi* and treasurers, a practice that scandalized Socrates. Some oracles, such as that of Heracles at Boura in Achaea, delivered their responses through the medium of knuckle-bones,

and others again with dice, the rolling of which referred to pre-established sentences in a list of predictions (Brixhe and Hodot 1988:134–64; Donnay 1984).

Hieroscopy, the examination of *hiera*, consisted of inspecting the signs left in the entrails of sacrificed animals. Although absent from Homer, it was widespread from the archaic period. Sacrifice was omnipresent, and hieroscopy made its impact upon daily life and on politics (Brisson 1974; Burkert 1992:46–53; Lissarrague 1990a:55–69). The liver was the chief part, and every irregularity in it was significant. In Euripides *Electra* (826–33), Aegisthus is terrified: "A lobe was missing from the liver: the portal vein and the adjacent vessels of the gall bladder displayed projections of doom." It is imminent death that is announced to him, a topos of Greek literature, found in Plutarch's *Lives* of Cimon, Alexander and Marcellus. Ordinary men would usually turn to a specialist seer, but they could sometimes know about omens from their own experience. The speed of the procedure was ideal during battle. Many tales, some of them historical, show diviners repeatedly sacrificing until they obtain a favorable sign (Jameson 1991).

Empyromancy, the method employed by the oracle of Zeus at Olympia, consisted of observing the fashion in which the sacrificial parts were consumed on the altar (Parke 1967:164–93). One could practice it after each sacrifice, and literature is packed with examples: "The diviners . . . observed the flames of the fire, splitting and flickering against each other, and the point of the flame where the double omen of victory or defeat was determined," says Euripides (*Phoenician Women* 1254–8). The accumulation of bad omens in the tragedies should not make us forget the current and less dramatic practice, presented by Xenophon or Plutarch and on ancient vases. The animal's tail could also straighten out in the fire and furnish a favorable omen (Van Straten 1995:118–41).

The methods of inductive divination were very varied. We may also cite hydromancy, which looked at the way water moved, or the floating of objects or liquids poured onto its surface, and catoptromancy, which exploited the properties of reflecting surfaces (Delatte 1932). A chapter could be devoted to astrology and magical varieties of divination, but there is no room for this here (see Chapter 23).

The diviner who uses the inductive method is the *mantis*, an elusive term. In myth Tiresias, Melampous, Calchas, Iamos, and Amphiaraos are not reduced merely to the interpretation of signs. That they access a kind of inspiration is undeniable (cf. Pindar, *Olympic Odes* 6.12–17; Luraghi 1997). To varying degrees, they are also doctors and purifiers, and they are often associated with mystery cults. Historical diviners offer less of the marvelous: the oldest, Manticles, is known from a statuette of around 700 BC from Thebes (Boston MFA 03.997 = *LIMC* Apollon 40). Famous is Megistias, who remained with Leonidas at Thermopylae after having forecast their defeat (Simonides, *Epigrams* 6 Campbell = Herodotus 7.228: is this prophecy authentic?). Lampon, an ally of Pericles, was a great public personage. Sthorys, who came from a Thasian family, received Athenian citizenship for his services in the battle of Cnidus (*IG* ii^2 17). However, there was no shortage of peculiar figures in Greece to confuse the categories. Empedocles presented himself as an itinerant "mage," an inspired poet and thaumaturge capable of entering and returning from Hell, in short a diviner in the great mythic tradition (Kingsley 1995). Finally, like many other "professional bodies," diviners constituted themselves into clans (which conferred upon them a knowledge that was partly innate), as in the case of the Iamids and the Clytiads at Olympia.

For an unknown reason, the interpretation of signs seems to have been almost alien to women, for all that they were inclined to magic and its terrible forms of knowledge. We know of Diotima at Mantinea, around 420 BC, represented as a priestess, a liver in her hand, and a *mantis*, Alcibia, of the family of the Iamids (Mantis 1990:51–2, pl. 18; *IG* v.1, 141).

Inspired divination

In inspired divination a god enters into direct contact, sought for or otherwise, with a human soul (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 179–80). He can take possession of an intermediary, who will reveal his will to the consultant – this is "enthusiasm" (which properly means "with a god within") – or he can manifest himself in a dream or a mantic vision (*onar–hypar*: Hanson 1980). The more the soul is detached from the body, the more efficacious the revelation: the Pythia is dispossessed of her consciousness (*ekphrōn*), and one who has a dream vision is in a state in which his soul loosens its bonds with the body to the maximum. This is why a dying person, when his soul is definitively separated from the body, becomes infallible. This idea opened onto a strange variety of divination about which little is known, divination by means of the evocation of the dead, or necromancy, practiced, for example, at Cape Tainaron (S.I. Johnston 1999a; Ogden 2001).

Oniromancy

Oniromancy tackled the natural ambiguity of dreams, whether they were unexpected or solicited in sanctuaries (Holowchak 2001). Dreams, which addressed the dreamer directly without any intermediary are mentioned in a great many inscriptions. They experienced an uninterrupted success even if an interpreter was sometimes required (cf. *IKnidos* 131). In logical terms, since the time of Homer (*Iliad* 1.63) dreams could be either apotreptic or protreptic, or again descriptive and inspirational. But the majority of dreams transmitted in literature are, like literary oracles, bogus ones (Lévy 1982).

Theophrastus' *Superstitious Man* (16.11) consults several specialists about the most trivial dream: these are the people like those who facilitated the compilation of works such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* of Artemidorus. This text's codification is far from simplistic. It is aware of scientific developments, and accordingly distinguishes truthful dreams from dreams the roots of which are to be found directly in one's daily preoccupations (Prologue). Only a systematic catalog of dreams could, in Greek eyes, permit a mantic understanding of them. Even Galen decided upon a certain operation after a dream of Asclepius (Boudon 2004). And the orator Menander advised that one should always claim that a dream had inspired a speech (*Peri epideiktikōn* 3.344).

Greece had incubation sanctuaries, where one slept in the hope of dreaming: they were almost exclusively dedicated to heroes, popular from the end of the fifth century BC until the fall of paganism, and often connected with healing. Asclepius in particular experienced a lightning expansion (Gorini and Melfi 2002; Graf 1992b). His huge sanctuary at Epidaurus, with its famous theater, was something to incur the envy of the Olympians. The consultant dreamed of an act of healing, sometimes at

the hands of the god, or of the cure, which would comprise ritual medical procedures, or both. The lists of miracles reminds us how complex belief can be, and invites us, five-year pregnancies aside, to accept the reality of psychosomatic cures (LiDonnici 1995). Asclepius was representative of the type, but he was not the only one. From across the Roman empire alone we may mention Amphiaraos at Oropus, Heracles at Hyettos, Amphilochos at Mallos, Sarpedon at Seleucia on the Calycadnos, and Sarapis at Memphis. The response glimpsed in a dream could be clarified, for priests, consultants, and doctors had a sufficiently similar conception of medicine: the vision could accordingly be realigned without being corrupted and, in fact, oracles reinforced medicine and vice versa.

Inspired divination through the mediation of a religious "magistrate"

For the Greeks, "enthusiasm" was an abnormal state of the soul, in which it was possessed by the divine will and introduced by this "divine gift" to the truth. After the revelation, the medium is in a very upset psychic state, unaware of himself, like the epileptic, whose condition was long held to be "sacred" (Laskaris 2002). To what did such possession correspond according to our categories?

The debate has been compromised by an undue focus on the Delphic ritual, which was the subject of vigorous literary elaboration in antiquity. Still today views range from a gentle degree of inspiration, due to the solemnity of the circumstances, to ecstasy or a sexual union between the Pythia and Apollo. The ancients had believed that a divine breath (*pneuma*) emanated from a crevice to inspire the prophetess, whence the hypothesis of hallucinogenic emanations, recently revived: ethylene or methane could have provoked a medium trance (Spiller, Hale, and De Boer 2002). As with the psychotropic drug hypothesis, this hypothesis seems to me, at least in part, to be a crutch for our ignorance, reassuring because "based" on chemistry. Before we can subscribe to it, we need a complete study that the context of each literary testimony takes into account.

Psychological investigation into the preliminary rituals is called for (Maurizio 1995). Numerous ordeals were required of the prophets and consultants of Asclepius: fasting (24 hours at Claros, 72 hours at Didyma) and/or special diets, cold baths, abstinences, disturbance of the sleep routine, the taking of auspices, physical efforts, obsessive meditation. Icy water, with a chthonic significance, had to be drunk. The destabilization of the body and the spirit was a form of purification desired by the oracular deity. The best-known preparation in the Greek world, that at the oracle of Trophonius, took several days. At the end of an exhausting process, the direct, but alarming, approach to the god and the condition of fear must have given a disproportionate impact to the slightest stimuli, by autosuggestion. Divination by "enthusiasm" would therefore have depended upon a "modified state of consciousness," even if this term is often a loose one (Bonnechere 2003).

There was no need for the seer to have an advanced education: the Pythia at Delphi just had to have, like children used as mediums in magic, a pure soul, one that was not too much bogged down in the passions (Plutarch, *On Socrates' Daimon* 20, 588d–589d). If prophets were numerous, prophetesses were also respected, perhaps particularly for tangible factors, such as an emotional condition better adapted to the psychic demands of possession.

The terminology was rather imprecise. *Prophētēs* (feminine *prophētis*) could signify either the man who entered into contact with the deity or the one who, after listening to words uttered by a medium (such as the Pythia), proclaimed them or gave them form. In both senses, this "magistrate" served a specific oracular deity, while the *mantis* was more of a generalist. In addition, the twelve sibyls, prophetesses lost in the mists of myth, formed a counterpart to the legendary diviners (Parke 1988).

Some Representative Sanctuaries

Delphi

Established in a magnificent setting in Phocis, Delphi was the most prestigious, the richest, and the most consulted oracle, and, even in myth, it was obviously the ultimate one. A mass of personal and political interests converged there, and these are attested by buildings, epigraphy, and literature (Amandry 1950; Fontenrose 1978; Jacquemin 1999). In addition to the oracle itself, one could find there a great many buildings, temples, a theatre, and structures needed for the cult and for the penteteric Pythian games. The origins of this site, its allegiance to Apollo, and the history of its divinatory method are disputed (Quantin 1992). But we can say that the oracle was functioning from at least the eighth century BC, the age of the "Greek renaissance" and the rapid rise of Apollo, that it built up its prestige in the seventh century and reached its zenith in the sixth and early fifth centuries BC.

Consultation originally took place once a year, it was said, but it quickly became monthly, and two or even three Pythias acted in relay. Taking account of *promanteia* (orders of precedence granted by the Delphians: Roux 1990), the consultants, whether acting on their own behalf or in a public capacity, purified themselves with water at the spring of Castalia and made a monetary offering (*pelanos*). They sacrificed on the altar of Apollo before the temple, in order to obtain omens, then they made their way to a room in the foundations of the temple, the *adyton*, the configuration of which remains a mystery. The Pythia, who had drunk water and chewed bay leaves, prophesied down below. Since one listened to her without seeing her, a curtain or a screen must have separated the priestess from her consultants. She sat in a bowl mounted on a tripod. The mantic significance of this remains unexplained, but it is related to sacrificial cooking.

Finally, the prophet clarified the divine message. Did he meddle with the responses in so doing? He could surely modify it in one way or another, but as no oracle that produced forgeries on a daily basis would have survived throughout antiquity, who would have been so foolish as to alter the will of the god? The consultant, who also listened to the Pythia, could validate the final text, and the very few ancient allegations of fraud focused upon the Pythias themselves rather than the interpreters.

Dodona

At Dodona in Epirus, the panhellenic *manteion* of Zeus and Dione flourished from the archaic period to the hellenistic one. Zeus' oak leaves produced a divinatory rustling which was interpreted by the priestesses, the Peleiads. The method fell

between the two mantic types: the tree's foliage belongs to the inductive type, but the priestesses are presented by Plato as on an equal footing with the Pythia in the *Phaedrus*, which deals with inspiration (244ab). For his part, Homer (*Iliad* 16.233–5), speaks of priests named *Selloi*, and subsequently Herodotus (2.56–7) speaks of male *prophēteis*. Matters are unclear, and it is dangerous to reduce everything to a linear evolution: priests and priestesses may well have coexisted. The oracle is famous for its lead tablets, which preserve some of the actual questions put to it.

Claros and Didyma

The principal oracles in Asia Minor were those of Claros and Didyma. They were both ancient, but they reached their apogee in the imperial period. Claros preserves the only *adyton* to have come down to us intact. A narrow subterranean corridor (70 x 180 cm) turns right seven times and leads into a vast vaulted crypt. Conditioned by a grueling ritual, the priest entered, alone, into a second vaulted crypt, where he drank water and prophesied to the consultants, who remained in the first room. Numerous inscriptions attest his public role, which was predominantly a religious one, in the cities of Asia Minor in the second and third centuries AD (Graf 1992a; Merkelbach and Stauber 1996). At Didyma the hellenistic temple of Apollo was the third largest in Greece. The priestess underwent a grueling preparation, then she prophesied, scepter in hand, sitting on a cube of wood with her feet in water, in an *adyton* which has been identified with the inner court, but the case can scarcely be proven. The *Didymeion* is a depressing example of our inability to synthesize the diverse evidence of site, inscriptions, and various late literary references (Fontenrose 1988).

Trophonius

We are given a detailed picture of the consultation process for Trophonius at Lebadaea by numerous testimonia from the seventh century BC to the third century AD, and not least by a most valuable description of Pausanias and by philosophical speculations about the oracle's divinatory principles (Pausanias 9.39.1–40.2; Bonnechere 2003). The consultant had to descend to the underworld (*katabasis*) to secure his response, becoming "his own prophet" (*hypophētēs autangelos*). He lay in the dark and, with the help of his fear, fell into a faint. When he recovered his wits he had been touched by a dream vision. The Greeks believed here that his soul had escaped from the confines of the body, during which time the god manifested himself. Thereafter the consultant, still groggy, was sat upon the throne of Memory, where the priests interrogated him about his vision.

Divination, Daily Life, and "Great History"

The influence of divination on politics is difficult to assess. According to Plutarch, a philosopher of integrity and intellect, Delphi had in former days responded in riddles in order to avoid the reprisals of the powerful. But in his own time, with the

pax Romana, "questions . . . bear upon the petty concerns of the individual; one asks whether one should marry, make a certain trip, lend money, and the most important consultations made by cities address matters of the harvest, livestock and health" (*Pythian Oracles* 408bc). This is the origin of the notion that the end of freedom for the cities had confined oracles to a trivial role, and this seemed to be supported by the corpus of Delphic oracles collected by Fontenrose: the majority of the political oracles, often in an obscure form, addressed events prior to the Roman domination (there are two principal sources for these, both moralizing: the *Histories* of Herodotus and the *Lives* of Plutarch).

The tablets from the Dodona oracle, inscribed between the sixth and the third centuries BC, the age in which the cities were at their height, vitiate this seemingly infallible reasoning (Rougemont 1998). A striking majority are concerned with daily life: "Agis asks Zeus Naios and Dione about his blankets and pillows, whether he has lost them or whether someone else has stolen them" (*Syll.*^{3} 1163). Uncertainties about voyages, commercial enterprises, choice of trade or craft, marriage, succession rights, or the paternity of children and anxiety over disease: the full range of questions was put to the supposedly diminished Delphic oracle. Plutarch is mistaken, therefore, when he finds something new in these banalities. What, then, was the political influence of oracles in antiquity?

This difficult question is clarified by epigraphy. At Delphi, Didyma, Dodona, and elsewhere, archaic or classical inscriptions only exceptionally address matters of state (the importance of which, however, caused them to be inscribed), but they frequently address religious crises or troubles of an unusual sort, and this is well supported by Plato (*Republic* 427bc). When cities and leagues did pose political questions, we know, thanks principally to Thucydides, that in referring to oracles they were looking for arbitration in settlement of an insoluble problem (1.24.6–1.25.2, 1.28.2–3). There is a marked tendency, particularly in the third and second centuries BC, for the sanctuaries to ratify treaties and obtain *asylia* (Fontenrose 1978: nos. H41–43, 71, 1988: nos. 5–7, 9, 11–12; Parke 1967: 262 no 8). Demosthenes' accusation, "The Pythia Philip-izes," is noteworthy, to be sure, but we must take into account Demosthenes' own political and rhetorical tricks (*Philippics* 3.32). Once Philip II was installed in the amphictyony, he effectively controlled central Greece, but this does not mean that the prophetess was corrupted.

On top of these doubts about the extent of the political role of oracles comes the consideration that the majority of prophecies in literature are bogus ones, in which the Greeks were quick to place trust. Sparta's victory over Arcadia at Eutresis in 367 BC without loss illustrates the case. According to Xenophon (*Hellenica* 7.1.27–32), the warring parties had been too proud to consult Delphi. But according to Diodorus (15.72.3), Dodona predicted to the Spartans "a war without tears," which strangely recalls a point made by Xenophon: Agesilaus, the ephors, and the *gerousia*, traumatized by the defeat at Leuctra, dissolved in tears at the announcement of total victory. The religious tradition was strong enough to justify the outcome with an oracle that set everything in order: the Spartans valiant and pious, the sanctuary perceptive, and the Arcadians, whose lot, decided by the gods, seemed less humiliating. And all the elements of the puzzle were in place for the creation of the prediction from the time of Xenophon. Even *post eventum*, oracles had their influence on "great history." The Delphic oracles on the colonization of the seventh and sixth centuries pose the

same problem: the role of the *manteion* would have varied with the questions put to it, but which are now lost: "To which gods should I sacrifice to secure the success of the colony?"; "Is it wise to establish a colony near Sybaris?"; or again, "Where should we direct our sails?" (Malkin 1987).

Plutarch has seemingly bequeathed to us his firm belief that Greek oracles basked in their supposed political glory and molded the Greece "of the free age." In his time, they were naturally perceived as no longer being at the height of the exaggerated reputation that the tradition had forged for them.

This strong criticism does not invite the denial of the influence of oracles, but redoubled caution in the interpretation of it (Bowden 2005). By contrast, the public influence of diviners and *chrēsmologoi* or oracle-mongers was certainly great. Lampon, who belonged to the circle of Pericles, was an influential political figure, as is demonstrated by his amendment to an Athenian decree about Eleusis (*IG* i^3 78). He was a drafter of the peace of Nicias. And this type of divination found still more fertile ground amongst the common people, so that, once delivered, a prediction could spread like wildfire, right to the heart of the *ecclēsia*: on the subject of an attack against the Spartans, "the *chrēsmologoi* declaimed oracles of every kind, and everyone listened to them according to their predispositions" (Thucydides 2.21.2–3).

The End of Oracles

Between the third and first centuries BC divination suffered from the effects of incessant wars in Greece. The appearance of decline is reinforced by the complete loss of hellenistic literature, whilst that of the Second Sophistic, which was interested in divination, experienced a much better fate. The philosophical schools discussed divination at length in their treatises, which are now lost, and Plutarch naturally follows them (S. Levin 1989). Divination evolved little, because, if any field was ruled by tradition, it was that one which involved contact with the gods. Nonetheless, some oracles of Apollo, especially in Asia Minor, became more theological or philosophical (Lane Fox 1997:216–54). For this reason inquiries were made that sought to uncover the truths of existence, such as the question posed by Oenoanda, a little city in Asia Minor, on the nature of the deity (Milner 2002).

The end of the Greek oracles is a varied story. It is connected with the rise of Christianity, but not in a simple way, because Christianity formed part of a culture in which this type of need was transformed. The vogue for astrology came to its zenith, and incubation continued to be practiced by Christians. It is true, however, that numerous laws of the Christian empire attempted to close down sanctuaries and others explicitly banned the oracles, notably those of Theodosius in 385 AD.

I would like to conclude on a note of drama and revelation. Alexander Demandt (1970) established the dates of all the eclipses in ancient sources and confronted them with the irrefutable data of astronomy: at least two hundred cases are bogus. We must be cautious about the veracity of signs and oracles invoked, but we must also be sensitive to the trust that the ancients placed in them.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Bouché-Leclercq 1879–82 remains the only substantial synoptic study of divination in antiquity, but note also Sordi 1993, Chirassi Colombo and Seppili 1998, and Sfameni Gasparro 2002. For the various types of inductive divination, see Bodson 1978 (animals), Lissarrague 1990a, Jameson 1991, and Van Straten 1995 (hieroscopy), Pollard 1977, Dillon 1996, and Collins 2002 (ornithomancy), Peradotto 1969 (cledonomancy), and Cordano and Grottanelli 2001 (cleromancy). For dreams see Hanson 1980 and Holowchak 2001. For necromancy, see Ogden 2001. For the major oracle sanctuaries, see Amandry 1950, Fontenrose 1978, Malkin 1987, and Maurizio 1995 (Delphi), Parke 1967 (Olympia, Dodona, and Siwah), Fontenrose 1988 (Didyma), Merkelbach and Stauber 1996 (Claros), and Bonnechere 2003 (Trophonios). For oracles and politics, see Parker 1985 [=2000a] and Bowden 2005. For the "decline" of oracles see Levin 1989. For prophets see Sordi 1993 and Sfameni Gasparro 2002, and for Sibyls see Parke 1988 and Chirassi Colombo and Seppili 1998.

PART IV

From Sacred Space to Sacred Time

CHAPTER TEN

A Day in the Life of a Greek Sanctuary

Beate Dignas

A Fly on the Wall

If it were less fragmentary, an inscription from Epidaurus could have offered the perfect evidence for a description of "a day in the life of a Greek sanctuary." The heading "Sacred Journal" (*hēmereisia* [*hiera*]), followed by an announcement of daily sacrifices, is most promising, and it looks as if the ancient reader was taken through the hours of the day and provided with a meticulous account of all ceremonies, thereby being informed about cult equipment and layout of temple and sanctuary. During "the first hour" we hear about the priest filling the incense burner and going around all the altars, making libations in the presence of a "fire bearer." In the evening, libations take place again and snippets of text talk about ladles being held up and about warm water, possibly for cleansing the altars (*LSS* 25; second or third century AD).

Unfortunately, it is generally believed that both the institution of an official "journal" and regulations such as the ones above were exceptional, a late custom that characterized healing sanctuaries or those of the so-called oriental deities. In contrast, our documentary record shows that with regard to most cults, emphasis and attention were given to festival days and special rituals as opposed to daily procedures. Apparently, many sanctuaries were not officially open on the majority of days of the year and religious officials were often not required to reside or perform duties on ordinary days, or rather those days not marked by the cult calendar. These parameters can be seen in an inscription from Oropus, where the sanctuary of Amphiaraus was administered in the following way:

> (1) Gods. The priest of Amphiaraus shall frequent the sanctuary from the end of winter to the plowing season, with no more than three days in between, and each month he shall spend no less than ten days in the sanctuary. He shall instruct the temple warden [*neōkoros*] to look after the sanctuary and its visitors according to the law ...

> (20) Whoever wants to be cured by the god shall pay a fee of no less than nine obols of accepted silver and deposit it in the treasury in the presence of the temple warden . . .
> (25) The priest shall say prayers for the offerings and shall place them on the altar, if he is present; when he is not present, the person offering the sacrifice does it, and at the sacrifice everyone shall say prayers for himself, but the priest shall do it at the public sacrifices. . . . (*LSCG* 69 = Rhodes and Osborne 2003: no. 27 (between 386 and 374 BC))

It is remarkable that the appointed priest serves only during the summer, which we may interpret as "high season." A temple warden, like a custodian, looks after visitors during other times. Worshipers were entitled to offer sacrifice and say prayers without the assistance of the priest. Just like the sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus, the Amphiareum was a healing sanctuary where incubation took place: the "patients" spent the night within the sacred enclosure and hoped for dreams or a visitation by the god – they would leave the shrine with instructions for a cure or find themselves already healed the next morning. Unfortunately, we can only guess at the volume of visitors during a typical day in high or low season, but scholars are inclined to surmise a low level of involvement on the part of religious personnel and hence imagine that the sanctuary was typically quiet. With regard to sanctuaries where ritual healing did not take place, the inclination to imagine a quiet sanctuary is even stronger. When, for example, a cult regulation from Teos asks the ephebes, the priest, and the sacred slaves "to sing hymns on every day of the patron god Dionysus upon the opening of the temple" and the imperial priest to "pour a libation upon the opening and closure of the god's temple," these regulations are generally interpreted as special ceremonies performed on the birthday of the god, not as everyday activities (*LSAM* 27 lines 7–13, reign of Tiberius, AD 14–37; contrast Lupu 2004:74).

The impact of these considerations on our image of the daily life of Greek sanctuaries, and also on our assessment of a "religious sphere" in ancient Greece, is not negligible. This chapter focuses on healing sanctuaries, which were indeed exceptional with regard to specific daily (or rather "nightly") activities, but which nevertheless allow us to question the accepted view that Greek sanctuaries in general showed a lack of emphasis on daily procedures. A publicly recorded opening ceremony is not a prerequisite for a vibrant "daily life" of a sanctuary. The activities that evolved around festival days and the considerable number of days dedicated to their preparation and celebration were not only special features but also part of "ordinary" life – not least because the sanctuary had to provide an all-year-round infrastructure to sustain and host the festivities. The subsequent chapters in this volume, which analyze the rites performed during festivals – the sequence of procession, hymns, prayers, sacrifice, competitions, and communal banquet – show how this "infrastructure" worked when called upon.

Even more important than this structural backdrop to special days is the fact that the worship of the gods went beyond the festival calendar, and that sanctuaries could be frequented by a number of individuals or groups at all times, above all for the purpose of dedicating votives and offering sacrifice, of sharing in the beauty and "awe" of the sacred place, but also in order to record public and private documents, to engage in self-representation, individual and communal, and to celebrate occasions

of historical significance. Throughout the year, religious personnel within and others as mediators between sanctuary and community oversaw the flow of these groups and catered to their needs. Ultimately, their efforts were directed towards enhancing the prosperity and popularity of the sanctuary and the community as a whole. It is not surprising that publicly recorded cult regulations and other types of documents relating to the administration of sanctuaries are particularly concerned with times when orderly behavior and regulations for the handling of a multitude of people were needed most, namely during festivals, and that they focus on "highlights" (good or bad) in the past or present. As expressions of civic institutions, they represent what we may call the "outside bureaucratic view." Many other aspects of cult had to be dealt with but were not part of this particular focus, and they may have been taken for granted by the more frequent visitors as well as those engaged in the service of the gods. As a consequence, they were not recorded or, if recorded, were committed to perishable materials.

Admittedly, a mere indication of the functional structures that existed in many sanctuaries is insufficient to enable us to envisage thousands of visitors and a multitude of busy religious attendants taking part in the everyday life of any given Greek sanctuary. Indeed, the scale and character of Greek sanctuaries varied enormously, and so did the activities that took place in each. The quiet setting of a rural shrine is utterly different from the buzzing noises of a religious "hub," frequented by civic officials, pilgrims, tourists, and merchants alike. A sacred area surrounding a small altar and marked off by a low fence is as much part of the picture as the complex infrastructure of an institution that included one or more monumental temples, treasury buildings, and multiple structures to house guests, suppliants, shopkeepers, and religious personnel. There is, therefore, no "typical" daily life of Greek sanctuaries. The following dilemma emerges. Details known about one sanctuary may help our imagination when filling in the gaps regarding others, but such generalizations may also be wrong. Even if we acknowledge that we have to tell multiple stories, we may not be able to tell a story about any single sanctuary, let alone a complete one. Where we *are* able to tell a fairly elaborated story, the case may be exceptional. Regardless of this dilemma, the soundest approach to the topic has to be the study of exceptionally well documented sanctuaries, enhanced by parallel evidence that in all likelihood applies to the chosen examples. According to the credo expressed above, "exceptionally documented" does not necessarily mean "exceptional."

Whether there were official "journals" or not, the worship of Asclepius is better documented than that of any other deity in the Greek world with regard to everyday activities. Whereas it is generally true that "the mortal individual is a habitual absentee from the study of Greek religion" (Parker 1996:185), the world of Asclepius yields tremendous insight in this respect. The reasons for this may lie in the close affective relationship between Asclepius and his worshipers and certainly have to do with the formal procedures of the act of "divine healing." However, neither this relationship nor the framework within which it manifested itself are untypical for Greek religious practice and "religiosity" (Pleket 1991:154). From the late sixth century onwards, the cult of Asclepius spread rapidly in the Greek world. Often, sanctuaries were established within a precinct previously dedicated to Apollo, and often it quickly transformed from a small private foundation into a prominent public cult. At Epidaurus, which successfully claimed to be the birthplace of the god and

from where many cults of Asclepius originated (Pausanias 2.26.8–9; for Athens see also *IG* ii^2 4960a), as well as elsewhere, the celebrations of public festivals in honor of the god were smoothly integrated into the religious calendar and in no way differed from those of other cults. Visitors to Epidaurus gathered in the civic center and made their way in a formal procession to the sanctuary, chanting hymns in praise of the god; upon entering the precinct they purified themselves and offered sacrifices that concluded in a formal banquet. Athletic and musical contests took place. During the fourth century, extensive building took place in a number of Asclepiea, which reflects the popularity of the cult. Detailed building accounts from Epidaurus illustrate the workmanship and expenses involved as well as the public organization and administration of the cult (Burford 1969; Tomlinson 1983; for Corinth see Lang 1977; for Athens see Aleshire 1989, 1991; for Kos see Sherwin-White 1978). Sanctuaries of Asclepius are therefore the ideal focus of this chapter and allow us to be a fly on the wall.

If Walls Could Speak . . .

Establishing what "went on" in a sanctuary requires knowledge of certain features. Naturally, a sanctuary's location and physical layout are among the most important indicators. Sanctuaries placed in the landscape or at the edge of a polis' territory may mark the religious significance of natural phenomena at this location or symbolize the boundary of civic territory. We can thus expect activities related to these functions, such as rituals expressive of the origin of worship in the place or the facilitation of exchange with neighbors. In contrast, urban sanctuaries placed in the center of the polis or just outside the city walls were focal points illustrating the close link between the civic community and its pantheon. Sometimes the historical evolution of cults places the sanctuary of a city's patron deity miles away from the urban center; in these cases polis and sanctuary are often visually, symbolically, and functionally linked by a *sacred way*, which forms an important part of the physical infrastructure of both and determines activities inside and outside the *temenos*. To some extent, the deity or deities worshiped in the sacred area determined its location and physical features (Alcock and Osborne 1994; Cole 2004; Malkin 1996; Schachter 1992). This also applies to Asclepius. Many of his sanctuaries were situated in extra-urban locations and very few were located in the political center, which may reflect a tense relationship between god and polis (Graf 1992a), but which ancient authors explained with reference to the need for a natural and "healthy" setting (Aelius Aristides, *Oration* 39.4; Vitruvius, *On Architecture* 1.2.7; Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, *Moralia* 286d). Asclepiea required abundant water supplies for various purposes to do with healing and purification, and thus were often placed close to natural springs. This prerequisite also applied to the worship of Apollo, which often preceded that of Asclepius in these locations. At Corinth, to give an example, the Asclepieum was located within the city walls but at some distance from the agora. Here, several draw-basins fed by long reservoirs cut back into the hill formed part of the main structures and created a man-made grotto (Figure 10.1). We see that the large rectangular precinct was defined by walls on the south and east sides, whereas on the west and east a large building and a colonnade respectively marked the boundaries. Purification by washing was required

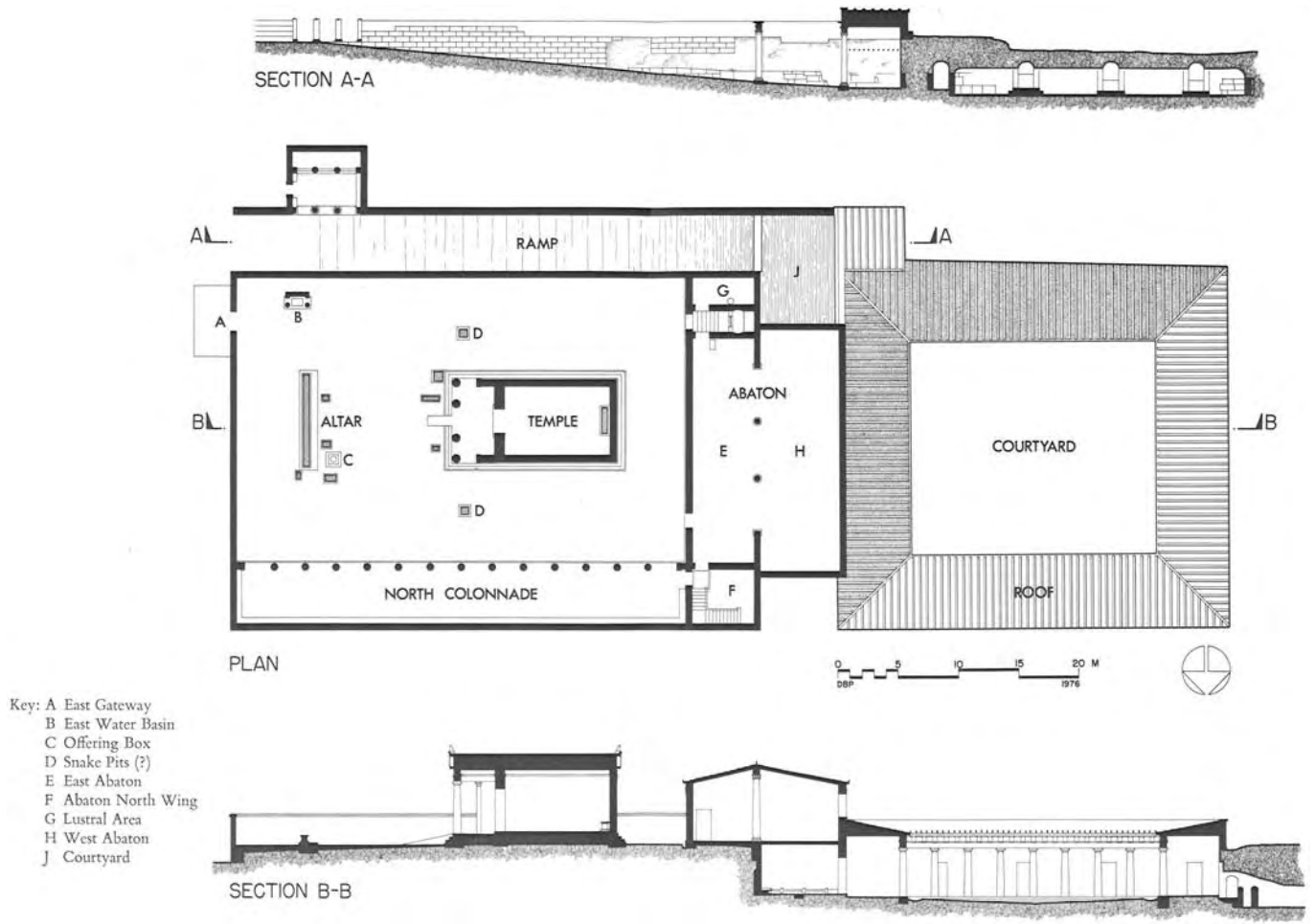

Figure 10.1 Plan and sections of the Corinthian Asklepieion. Reproduced with permission from Lang 1977:q fig. 15, by D.B. Peck after Roebuck, with Plans B and D by J. Travlos

upon entering Asclepius' precincts; at Corinth, the visitor, who entered through a gateway in the east wall, was immediately confronted with a water basin set in a small porch before reaching a long altar. Here we find a structure that would have served as an offering-box for coins, a *thēsauros*, which was a typical feature of Asclepiea but existed in many other sanctuaries too (Dignas 2002:21–3, 30–1; Kaminski 1991).

Exclusive to sanctuaries of healing deities was a type of building called *abaton* ("the inaccessible place") or *enkoimētērion* ("the place where one sleeps"), where those asking for a cure spent the night and were attended to by priests and the god himself. At Corinth, this was a complex building with an eastern part on the same level as the temple and a stairway descending to the level of a roofed court and fountain. The south wing included a small bathing area from where steps descended to a rectangular basin. The rooms below were fitted with couches and tables. Such rooms – as elsewhere – served as dining rooms for visitors and religious officials. At Epidaurus, the *abaton* was a large rectangular building on the south side of the precinct. In the developed sanctuary there was also a "banqueting hall" characterized by several rooms arranged round a large central courtyard, for either a few – privileged – visitors or larger groups. In order to accommodate the artistic and athletic contests that existed already in the fifth century, a theater and a stadium were built during a second phase of construction at the end of the fourth century. The immense seating space of the theater, for 13,000–14,000 spectators, reflects the number of worshipers.

A further aspect of sanctuaries of Asclepius, attested in written sources rather than through archaeological evidence, is the "sacred grove" (*hieron alsos*), which at Epidaurus may have been synonymous with the entire precinct (Pausanias 2.27.1 and 7). A cult regulation from Kos prohibits the cutting of cedar wood in the *temenos* (*LSCG* 150), and one of Asclepius" patients at Epidaurus was surprised by a sacred snake in the god's sacred grove (Herzog 1931 no. 44 = LiDonnici 1995: C1). However, sacred land around the immediate precinct is attested for many sanctuaries, and several cult regulations state that pilgrims were not allowed to cut trees for firewood, or to pasture animals within the precinct (e.g. *LSCG* 37, Attica, end of fourth century BC; *LSCG* 65, lines 78–80, 150, Andania, first century BC).

The reciprocal relationship between physical aspects of sanctuaries and their "daily life" can be seen best through votive offerings (Van Straten 1990). Sacred precincts were filled with objects dedicated to the deity, whether free-standing statues on pedestals or benches, hanging from the *temenos* wall, from trees, or displayed in various other ways. They could be protected from the open air inside the temple, displayed for worshipers to look at, or stored away in a separate treasury (building). Old or damaged objects were often buried in pits or could even be melted down and recast into new cult equipment (*IG* ii^2 839; *LSCG* 41). Once dedicated, however, all votives remained the property of the god and could not leave the sanctuary. Some sanctuaries were so full of votives that this became a problem. Plato (*Laws* 909e–910a) complains about "cluttered precincts," and several inscriptions deal with ways to avoid votives spilling into the paths within the sanctuary (Rhodes, *LSS* 107), ruining architectural elements (Miletus, *LSS* 123) or blocking the cult image from view (Athens, *LSCG* 43). Regulations such as these reveal that sanctuaries were the opposite of serene, empty, or static space. The impression of constant rearrangement and landscaping is enhanced by references to the construction of new and the repair of old buildings.

Sanctuaries of Asclepius were filled with special votives, expressing the hopes and gratitude of those who wanted to be healed by the god. Corinth, for example, has yielded numerous so called "anatomical ex-votos," clay imitations of the part of the body affected (Lang 1977; for a catalog see the appendix in Van Straten 1981). Elsewhere, the same purpose was fulfilled by dedications of bandages, rocks, dice, silver pigs, or goblets. Clay cocks, Asclepius' favorite sacrificial animal, have been found and must have been substitute sacrifices of those who could not afford even a small sacrificial animal. At Epidaurus and Oropus, worshipers offered tablets (*pinakes*) with a record of the cure and reliefs depicting the visitation by the god (see below).

Many more examples could be added and reinforced by striking archaeological and epigraphic evidence. The categorization of features, buildings, and their functions helps us to contextualize sacred space. However, such studies of physical context seldom permit us to go beyond a description of the shell and get to the heart of life within any given sanctuary. What we need is a narrative and examples of human interaction in the described settings because we want to get a feel for the atmosphere and contacts between humans that took place in Greek sanctuaries by "animating" the source material. In other words, how can we describe a more "personal view" or a "view from within" in order to gain a fuller picture? And how might such perspectives fit in with an overall view of what went on in a Greek sanctuary?

The Eyes of the Worshiper: Daytime

In search of instructive examples, Herodas' fourth mime (mid-third century BC), which dramatizes a visit by two women to a sanctuary of Asclepius, is a rare find. One of the two women, Cynno, dedicates a cock and a votive tablet to the god, her thank-offerings for having been cured. The realistic setting allows us to view a sanctuary (perhaps that of Asclepius on Kos?) with the eyes of the ancient worshiper. Apparently, the women and their slaves enter the precinct early in the morning and place their offering next to the cult image of Hygieia, which must have been located next to one of several altars outside the temple. Many inscribed offerings provoke their admiration. When Cynno wants to show her friend even lovelier votives, she asks her slave to call the temple warden (*neōkoros*), presumably to open the door to the temple. The request becomes obsolete when the door is opened and the curtain unfastened without prompting – possibly "because it is day," or because at this point there are many people around who have the same request. Inside, the women admire more works of art and then engage in a conversation with the temple warden, who assures Cynno that her offering has found favor with the god. Almost casually, she apologizes for the small value of her sacrifice, a cock, and promises to come back with her husband and children. The mime ends with Cynno instructing her slave to give a portion (a leg) of the sacrifice to the temple warden, to place a coin into a box shaped like a snake, and to take the rest away for consumption at home.

The atmosphere depicted is that of a busy, much-visited sanctuary even on ordinary days. We also learn that access to the temple is granted as a matter of fact to the ordinary worshiper, who is allowed to look around and admire all votives not only in the precinct but also within the temple. Other literary sources describe incidents of ordinary worshipers praying in front of the cult statue and refer to hymns and other

ceremonies taking place within temples (Corbett 1970:157 n. 30 with references). The material remains of strong-boxes further confirm the idea that ordinary worshipers had access to the inside of temples. Herodas' mime is certainly full of irony and mocks the simple (and shrewd) character of the women, but it is also full of acute observations about an everyday, unpretentious scenario: a sacrifice and a votive tablet are offered to the gods in return for a cure, and the visit to the sanctuary is pleasurable because it stimulates the senses through the beautiful items displayed in it. Cynno, at least, is more than familiar with the place and situation and knows just what to do. Her interaction with the religious official is matter of fact, almost playful, even ironical (although she addresses him as "most mighty"). She knows her "rights" and follows the rules; assertively she decides what to give to the gods and their attendants.

The mime is an exceptional piece of evidence. In general, the literary record is silent about the administration of sanctuaries, the interaction between worshipers and religious personnel, and the responsibilities of the latter. Although the statements and praises of Aelius Aristides are marvelous testimonies to the intense experiences of a worshiper of Asclepius in the second century AD, they may not be representative of religious experiences in earlier periods. Here, the bulk of our evidence is epigraphical and consists in particular of cult regulations that deal with priestly duties and privileges, the economic dimension of sanctuaries and orderly behavior within their boundaries. As for the "historical accuracy of Herodas' mime," the scene could have taken its stage directions straight from the cult regulation of the Amphiareum at Oropus. Surprisingly, we get a very different general impression of the level of daily activity in each case. Moreover, in the mime the role of the temple warden is no longer that of a low-key "custodian" who attends to a deserted sanctuary during the winter months.

The Eyes of the Worshiper: Night-time

At Oropus, the temple warden was instructed to inscribe the names and cities of the god's patients, but the cult regulation does not mention any record of the healing process. However, sanctuaries of Amphiaraus and of other healing deities have yielded wonderful insights into how patients experienced their night with Asclepius. Many thankful worshipers dedicated votive reliefs with which they represented what had happened to them (Van Straten 1976, 1981). A dedicatory relief from Oropus (or Athens) from the end of the fifth century BC (Figure 10.2) bears the inscription "Archinos dedicated [this relief] to Amphiaraus," and depicts the stages of Archinos' healing. In the background on the right he is lying down and visited by a snake, who is licking or possibly biting his right shoulder; the god himself in snake form is watching over his patient. In the left foreground, the god, in human form, bearded and supported by his staff, directly attends to a standing Archinos, touching the same shoulder, possibly applying some dressing to a wound. In the center background, a rectangular plaque or tablet mounted on a pillar depicts the dedicatory relief itself and reminds the viewer of the religious and physical context of the whole scene. The effect of visual representations such as the Archinos relief is powerful and enables us to understand the meaning behind the multitude of dedicatory reliefs at any

Figure 10.2 Amphiaraus heals Archinos. Dedicatory relief from Oropus (or Athens), end of fifth century BC. *ANM* 3369. Photograph: Hermann Wagner, DAI. DAI Neg. no.: D-DAI ATH-NM 3312

given healing sanctuary. Equally impressive are the so-called miracle inscriptions from Epidaurus, where patients tended to put into words the miracles that had happened to them during incubation and inscribed them on wooden or stone tablets, which they then dedicated to Asclepius. At the end of the fourth century the Epidaurian priests composed a catalog of the most important cures, the so-called Epidaurian *iamata* (Dillon 1994; LiDonnici 1995). Pausanias was still able to look at six of the many stelae originally displayed in the precinct (2.27.3). Among the ones that have survived on stone, each "entry" in the catalog reveals details about the process of incubation as well as the personal experience of the patients. Their names (and in many cases their provenance) are usually followed by their ailments. The stories of their healing are not in the least stereotypical, and they can be quite humorous. The following is a typical example:

> A dumb boy. This boy came to the sanctuary for a voice. When he had made the preliminary sacrifice and performed the accustomed rites . . . the temple servant who brings in the fire for the god [*ho pyrphorōn*], looking at the boy's father, demanded he should promise to bring within a year the thank-offering for the cure if he obtained that for which he had come. But the boy suddenly said, "I promise." His father was startled at this and asked him to repeat it. The boy repeated the words and from this time on was well. (Rhodes and Osborne 2003: no.102 v = LiDonnici 1995 A5)

Visual and epigraphic testimonies are enhanced by a passage from our literary record, the most vivid verbal step-by-step rendering of what happened during incubation. Aristophanes' character Wealth visits the sanctuary of Asclepius on Aegina in the hope of being cured of his blindness. The report of Carion to his wife tells us that for the purpose of purification Wealth was first taken down to the sea and bathed. After a preliminary sacrifice of little cakes, Wealth and his company lay down on rough beds in the *abaton*. A temple servant (*propolos*) extinguished the lamps and asked everybody to go to sleep. Not being able to sleep, Carion saw "the priest nicking the cheesecakes and dried figs from the holy table; and after that he went right round all the altars to see if there might be any cakelets left on any of them, and then consecrated them in to a sack he had" (*Wealth* 660–82).

From all these vivid testimonies it becomes clear that administering and promoting divine healing had a tremendous impact on the whole business of "cult operation." As in Aristophanes' *Wealth*, many patients would have been accompanied by attendants or family members, and those who came from far away would have stayed for more than one night. Pausanias states that within the precinct of Asclepius' sanctuary in Tithorea (Phocis) there were dwellings for both the suppliants and the servants of the god (10.32.12). Interestingly, not only later authors but also many of the Epidaurian *iamata* refer to the patients as "suppliants" (*hiketai*). Individuals or even groups seeking refuge in a sanctuary were common to all sanctuaries and required the same kind of attention as worshipers visiting a sanctuary for a cure (Sinn 2000). Temporary lodgings, facilities for cooking and food consumption, as well as a water supply had to be provided. Many sanctuaries therefore had a smaller and a larger precinct, with temple, altar, and votives separated in some form from an area that could be used for the accommodation of large numbers of cult participants, suppliants, or further groups of visitors. The everyday life of a sanctuary, not only a healing sanctuary, thus resembled and was quite closely linked to the everyday life of its environment (Sinn 2000:179).

Servants, Mediators, Administrators

Who provided the elaborate infrastructure that was necessary for all this? And how did a day in the life of a sanctuary look from the perspective of those who served the gods and looked after their worshipers? An inscription from Samos, which does not refer to a healing sanctuary, and which is quite exceptional in its content, spells out the wide range of activities that must have been going on within the precincts of many sanctuaries: around 245 BC the Samians ratified a proposal by the *neōpoiai*, a board of temple curators, which dealt with the terms of contract of the shopkeepers (*kapēloi*) in the Heraeon (*IG* xii.6, 169; Lupu 2004: no. 18). Four shops were leased out in the sanctuary, and the lessees remained in residence for the entire year. No soldier, unemployed person, slave, or suppliant was allowed to sell anything or to be handed any of the four shops. The lessees were not allowed to buy items from these groups. Nor were they allowed to employ suppliant slaves. There is a special clause that prohibits sacred slaves (*hieroi paides*) from selling items.

Although the activities of soldiers, unemployed persons, slaves, and suppliants were to be kept to a minimum, it becomes clear that the presence of these groups was part

of the daily life in the Heraeon. Allowing for a "business life" within the precinct was not only a matter of providing religious personnel and visitors with goods that were needed for the religious life of a cult; it was also a matter of providing long-term and stable income for the sanctuary. Cult finances feature most prominently in our sources (Dignas 2002). Over and over again, cult regulations spell out guarantees and warnings to do with revenues from sacred land, sacred loans, priestly perquisites, obligations and fines of worshipers, costs of sacrificial victims, the expenses incurred by the upkeep of religious buildings, and so forth. This economic dimension of sanctuaries generated a number of activities and could require a multitude of people to administer them. Pausanias claims that those living in the neighborhood of the sanctuary of Asclepius in Titane (Sicyon) were mostly servants of the god (2.11.5: *perioikousi . . . to polu oiketai tou theou*). How many "servants" would have been needed, and what were they engaged in doing? As the "perspective of visitors" has shown, one important duty of those employed in sanctuaries was to supervise the behavior of visitors to the precinct and to facilitate their interaction with the deity. It looks as if priests (*hiereis*) were overseers of the process. When, during the second century BC, the Pergamenes decided to assign the priesthood of Asclepius to a certain Asclepiades and his descendants on a hereditary basis, this came with "charge of the general good conduct within the sanctuary" (*IvPergamon* 251 = *LSAM* 13, lines 24–5) and "power over the sacred slaves" (line 26).

Given the large number of sacrifices that were offered on behalf of all those approaching the healing god, much effort would have been directed towards the provision of firewood, the slaughter and carving of sacrificial animals, and the preparation and cleansing of the altars, as well as looking after the typical sacred tables filled with cakes and fruits. If we trust Herodas' scenario, each worshiper received immediate feedback on a thank-offering from the available religious official, in this case the temple warden, who engaged in a personal conversation with Cynno.

In contrast to what we learn from Herodas' mime, Pausanias tells us that at Epidaurus and Titane all sacrifices, whether offered by locals or foreigners, had to be consumed within the sanctuary (2.27.1), a requirement that we find also in the context of non-healing sanctuaries. Cult attendants were needed to direct the visitors towards cooking facilities and suitable eating space, to maintain these facilities, and to clean them for new visitors. Although the required preliminary purification could often have taken place by way of a bath in the sea (as was the case with Aristophanes' Wealth), cult officials must have assisted the worshipers and supervised their use of bathing facilities. A fragmentary inscription from imperial Pergamum specifies that worshipers, after purification, were to enter the sanctuary dressed in white and wearing a laurel wreath. Most likely the text included further specifics. Such instructions generated the need for a sale of the required garments and objects (see again the Samian *diagraphē* for the shopkeepers in the Heraeon and also the references to a "market" of such goods in the Andanian mystery inscription; *LSCG* 65 lines 99–103). At Epidaurus, the priest of Asclepius had to provide those who failed to bring with them the necessary implements for the preliminary sacrifices with what they needed: grain, garlands, and firewood. Each had its exact price, and the priest received a total sum of three obols for his service and expense (*LSCG* 22).

The cult regulation from Oropus, Herodas' mime, the miracle inscriptions from Epidaurus, and other testimonies all refer to a fee paid by worshipers before or after

incubation. The texts also emphasize the perquisites of priests or assistants who administer the process of healing. When Aristophanes' Carion observes the priests' nightly "rounds" in the *abaton*, he ironically interprets this as the priest "nicking" the items on tables and altars. The priest was not stealing anything though – a cult regulation from Pergamum explicitly assigns "all the offerings which are dedicated on the sacred table" to the holder of Asclepius' priesthood (*IvPergamon* 251 lines 14–15). Religious officials had an obvious interest in making sure that all visitors paid their fee and attributed the customary share to them, not least because ultimately they were held accountable by civic institutions for the way they handled the sacred revenues. Early in the third century BC the Athenians ordered a special type of inventory, an *exetasmos*, for the temple of Asclepius (Aleshire 1989: Inventory IV); this went beyond the regular priestly *paradosis*, the handing over of accounts from one priest to the next, and was probably prompted by a suspicion of maladministration. The listing of the contents of the temple and other dedications in precious metal give us a tour of the temple and allow an insight into the careful arrangement of votives. Apparently priests personally decided on this arrangement and often attempted to group the dedications of their priesthoods to specific areas (Aleshire 1989:102–12, 222, 1991:41–6).

Although the inventories of the Athenian Asclepieum reflect an Athenian practice that emphasized the meticulous recording of and accounting for the votive offerings in the sanctuary, priests and other religious officials everywhere must have been engaged in book-keeping of some sort and must have kept records of both inventories and special events during their term of office. The Delian inventories, which include the sanctuaries' revenues from leases and loans, illustrate how complex and wide-ranging priestly supervision could be. On Thasos the priest of Asclepius had to make sure that a lessee of a "garden of Heracles" kept the a specific area clean and received "a sixth" daily from the lessee (*IG* xii.8, no. 265, fourth century BC). In the first century BC the priest of Asclepius at Calchedon was allowed to use the public land around the sanctuary (*LSAM* 5, lines 7–8) – the same priest was, incidentally, asked to "open the temple every day" (lines 23–4).

Sacrilegious and otherwise criminal behavior was a concern in many sanctuaries. At Oropus, the "job description" of the priest of Amphiaraus includes a section on jurisdiction (*LSCG* 69; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: no. 27, lines 9–17). Although it looks as if the priest's jurisdiction was limited to misdemeanors, it included offences against both the sanctuary and private persons. The possible scenarios are many: the theft or damage of votives, cult equipment, or sacred buildings, the violation of cult regulations, the failure to pay fees, violence among worshipers and servants.

Apart from *hiereis*, *neōkoroi* and *therapeutai* ("attendants") or *hieroi douloi* ("sacred slaves"), there were other groups or individuals who contributed to the functioning of the daily life within Asclepius' sanctuaries. Speaking for his own time and for Pergamum, Aelius Aristides refers to "those who had posts in the temple" (*Oration* 48.47: *taxeis echontes*) as a group distinct from the servants. He himself mentions a "doorkeeper" (*Oration* 47. 32: *thyrōros*). Members of a chorus (*aoidoi*) as well as "guards" (*phrouroi*) are attested at Epidaurus as recipients of parts of the sacrificial animals, and so is a group of *hiaromnamones* ("recorders"; *LSCG* 60 lines 29–34, ca. 400 BC). The latter appear again in a fragmentary cult regulation that may assign them judicial functions in the sanctuary (*LSCG* 24, second century BC, possibly a

copy of an older text). A "bath attendant" (*balaneus*) existed in the sanctuary of Asclepius on Aegina (*IG* iv^2 1 no. 126, AD 160), and Aelian (*Nature of Animals* 9.33) refers to *zakoroi*, who instructed the patients during incubation. The parallel in the incubation scene of Aristophanes' *Wealth* is the *propolos*, possibly an official title. The *pyrphoros* ("fire-bearer") in the Epidaurian miracle text presented above may also be descriptive rather than an official title. By analogy we would expect to have found individuals attending to the cult statue and other parts of the temple that were decorated, and, from time to time, groups of workmen engaged in the repair or embellishment of sacred buildings. From the point of view of all these individuals and groups a "sacred journal" would have been indispensable.

Sanctuary and Polis

Having explored the daily life of a (healing) sanctuary in its physical context, from the perspective of the worshiper and the perspective of those employed in its service, it remains to ask about the role of the polis in all this. Civic institutions were largely responsible in creating the framework for everything discussed so far. In many cases cities appointed boards of officials who were in charge of the religious affairs of the city and not spatially and institutionally attached to one particular sanctuary. Often these were financial functionaries (*tamiai*, *hierotamiai*, *prostatai*), which reflects the special civic interest in control over the financial affairs of sanctuaries. On Euboea, the Eretrians appointed *hieropoioi*, who oversaw the processions of boys and girls in honor of Asclepius and were also responsible for inscribing their names in the god's sanctuary (*LSCG* 93 lines 10–15; fourth or third century BC). However, a polis was also a "consumer" of religious life. Worshipers at Erythrae (*IErythrai* 205, 380–360 BC) were reminded that, when the polis offered preliminary sacrifices to Asclepius, these were offered on behalf of all and that no private person was to offer preliminary sacrifices during a festival but otherwise to act according to the parameters stated in the cult regulation. Although we see the distinction between special days and the rest of the year (*en tēi heortēi – ana de ton allon chronon*), between the ritual experience of a group as a whole and of individual worshipers, private and public aspects of the cult were smoothly integrated. In 138/7 BC the Athenians honored a priest of Asclepius and Hygieia for his admirable performance during his term of office (*IG* ii^2 974).The list of tasks starts from the initial sacrifices of the year and then continues with the priest's role at the festivals of Asclepius, sacrifices on behalf of the community and his reporting on the positive outcome of these. Although what follows is fragmentary, there is no doubt that the text increasingly moves on to "daily matters." We learn that the priest appointed his son as key bearer (*kleidouchos*), that he provided a chorus for the god, and there is reference to "services held every day." The order in which praises are given may be less "meaningful" than one might think. As festivals provided an exceptional opportunity for priests to illustrate their efforts on behalf of the community as a whole, these received special attention.

The activities and worship of individuals were therefore an important aspect of public religion and did not stand in any opposition to it. With regard to a different "dichotomy," it is remarkable that many sanctuaries of Asclepius originated as private foundations and were transformed into important public cults. It is not easy to

account for this transformation from "private" to "public" and it is just as difficult to distinguish clearly between "private individual worship," "publicly regulated individual worship," and entirely "public worship" once this had happened. While many parameters of the individual's participation in cult would now be spelled out by civic institutions, private interest in the life of the sanctuary would not be diminished and could even be enhanced. Vice versa, when one of the most famous sanctuaries of Asclepius, that in Pergamum, was again "privatized" (see above, *IvPergamon* 251) during the second century BC, the interest and participation of the polis in the well-being and opportunities of the sanctuary did not cease but, on the contrary, were the main reason for the move. Inevitably, the categories of "life in the sanctuary" and "life outside" merge.

Finally, one may reflect again on how useful the initial "sacred journal" from Epidaurus is. Was the balance between a public and a private sphere untypical when it came to healing sanctuaries? Individuals approached Asclepius for a cure, individuals continued to express their gratitude to the god by offering more sacrifices and thank-offerings, individuals may also have had special ties with the god independent of any current or past ailment. Theocritus (*Epigrams* 8) gives us an example in which the dedicant of a statue proclaims that he sacrifices to the god every day forever (*hos min ep' ēmar aei thueessin hikneitai*). However, while there was an exceptionally close personal relationship between Asclepius and his worshiper, the activities accounted for in the worship of this and other healing gods were not alien to the atmosphere and daily life of other sanctuaries. The specific rites and proceedings in healing sanctuaries have yielded testimonies that give us valuable insight into perspectives of Greek religion that are under-represented in the evidence derived from other sanctuaries. These insights allow us to understand and "animate" the organizational framework attested for many other sanctuaries beyond festival days and special sacrifices held on sparse occasions during the year.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Among the extensive scholarly literature on Greek sanctuaries, it is difficult to choose an "ideal" introduction to the topic. If one looks for a focus on the everyday activities in sanctuaries, one is harder pressed to find works at all. Tomlinson 1976 is, however, excellent on both counts. Pedley 2005 is informative about a number of central topics and examples, which can be further explored through a concise thematic bibliography. Dillon 1997, examining many practical aspects of Greek pilgrimage, has much to say on the required infrastructure of well-frequented sanctuaries. Unfortunately, articles such as Corbett 1970, which concentrates on and stresses the active use of temples by the Greek worshiper, are rare. Marinatos and Hägg 1993 includes a wide range of contributions, of which Sinn's chapter (also in Buxton 2000) is the most relevant, reconstructing the lively atmosphere of "Greek sanctuaries as places of refuge." Østby's bibliography in the same volume is arranged geographically. Dignas 2002 explores the economic dimension of sanctuaries and focuses on their interaction with the poleis that hosted them as well as external rulers.

Schachter 1992 is relevant throughout. Here, the chapters by Graf and Van Straten set the scene for the worship of Asclepius. Because of the immense breadth both of its collection of testimonies and of its interpretation, Edelstein and Edelstein 1945 (reprinted 1998 with a new

introduction) is and will remain the standard work and "gold mine" on Asclepius. For visual representations of the process of incubation see Van Straten 1976. Individual healing sanctuaries have received varying degrees of attention but publications can be found easily. For Epidaurus, Burford 1969 studies the organization and administration of the construction work on the sanctuary in the fourth and third centuries BC. Tomlinson 1983 presents a concise discussion of the site and its monuments. Aleshire 1989 and 1991 are superb on the Athenian Asclepieum, which is explored through the lens of its inventories. The main treatment of the Amphiareum at Oropus is Petrakos 1968. Pleket 1991 is important with regard to questions of religious mentality and the representative character of the worship of healing deities.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Purity and Pollution

Andreas Bendlin

Introduction

''Purity'' and ''pollution'' are not given or natural physical or mental states. They must be understood as two categories constructed in relation to religious and social conventions. They create temporary differentiation among what, in another context or at another time, would remain undifferentiated. As we shall see momentarily, childbirth and death and contact therewith, menstruation, consumption of certain foods, or sexual intercourse were inevitable and often acceptable parts of daily life in the Greek Mediterranean world. If any such condition had unpleasant physical consequences, one would live with such consequences as best one could and naturalize their presence. But there existed social situations and religious contexts in Greek culture where those very biological conditions and dietary or sexual practices were interpreted as representing a state of ritual pollution. The paradox inherent in religious purity regulations is, as the Greek evidence illustrates, that the unexceptional can also signify a transgression. And contrary to what is usually claimed, the opposite of pollution is not purity: with regard to both purity and pollution, the opposite is normality. Purity and pollution are two powerful religious categories by means of which Greek religion enforces a religious world-view upon the daily lives of ordinary Greeks. Whenever they access the realm of the sacred (which is said to be pure), and whenever they return from a state of pollution to their ordinary lives, religion requires purification of them. Religious scruple about purity limits access to the divine; religious scruple interprets childbirth and death, menstruation, certain foods, or sexual intercourse as ritually polluting. But it would be wrong to naturalize purity and pollution as the two dominant interpretative models in Greek culture. As we shall see, the distinction between purity and normality or between pollution and normality that religion maintains can only be temporary, and any differentiation which has been maintained needs to be abandoned, if we wish to return (and return we must) to our daily lives. Those very biological conditions and social practices which, a moment ago, signified ritual pollution become normality again.

The Greek language possesses an elaborate range of words to express the notions of ritual purity, pollution, and purification. In the large majority of our texts, these notions are expressed by Greek *hagnos* or *katharos*, and sometimes by both, or by their many respective cognates. Ritual pollution, as opposed to an accidental contact with mere dirt, is normally called *miasma* or *musos*. But *agos* and *enagēs*, semantically related to the **hag*-root, and meaning "consecrated" or "sacred to a god," may be used in relation to a divine vengeance or curse and thus attain the connotation of a pollution of some sort (Moulinier 1952; Parker 1983:3–14). The implicit juxtaposition in *agos* of the sacred with something which seems ambivalently impure has understandably fascinated the modern scholarly imagination. It resulted in the application of the modern anthropological concept of "taboo" to Greek notions of purity and pollution. But the juxtaposition of the sacred and the impure is never given serious attention in the Greek texts because the divine is regarded as pure. In this discussion, the idea of ancient taboo will therefore be disregarded.

Ritual Purity

By modern hygienic standards, ancient Greek cities, like all other pre-modern urban centers, were very dirty places indeed. Overcrowding and its many insalubrious effects, urban pollution, and an insufficient understanding of the necessity of waste disposal made the ancient city particularly disease-ridden. If the ancient Greek medical writers developed a rudimentary understanding of the relation between living conditions and urban pollution on the one hand and the impact of an epidemic on the other, they lacked the means to implement their pathological solutions; more importantly, they also lacked a deeper understanding of the causes of epidemic diseases. That is to say that they were perfectly able to develop naturalistic diagnoses of the circumstances under which an epidemic might possibly strike, the varied courses it would normally take, and the different effects it could have with regard to different people. But neither the authors of the Hippocratic treatise *Epidemics* nor, for that matter, Thucydides' account of the Athenian plague of 430 BC (2.47–54) significantly advance beyond the realm of diagnosis. Interestingly, however, the authors of the Hippocratic Corpus, when they do proffer a medical explanation, see the cause in pathogenic pollutions (*nosera miasmata*) of the humid air carrying the disease from abroad (Hoessly 2001:274–8).

It might be tempting to suppose a causal link between the ancient experience of filthy urban environments and epidemic diseases, on the one hand, and the Greek insistence on maintaining ritual purity on the other. Undoubtedly, there is more than just a grain of truth in such a supposition. When the authors in the Hippocratic Corpus explain the cause of an epidemic as a form of aerial pollution (*miasma*), they implicitly fall back, as we shall see in a moment, upon a traditional religious interpretative model, namely the notion that epidemic diseases are caused by a human *miasma* and may be perceived as something sent by the gods. Supposing a causal link between environmental pollution and ritual purity, however, would entail applying to the ancient Greeks our hygienic standards and our notions of what ought to count as polluting. For instance, while death and the dead are across the ancient Mediterranean routinely treated as *ritually* polluting, there appears to exist only

isolated evidence concerning their being regarded as *physically* (or pathogenically) polluting. Even though undertaking is seen as a marginalized and "dirty" profession throughout Greco-Roman antiquity (Derda 1991), it would be rash to suppose that the religious categorization of death as a ritual pollution is exclusively reflective of more general Greek societal notions of death. Quite the contrary: when the Greek funerary regulations detail both the ritual pollution affecting the house of the dead and the different means as well as conditions of subsequent purification (Frisone 2000:30, 57), they categorize the family as only temporarily "polluted" and limit the state of pollution to the immediate household and those entering the house; these may attain post-pollution normality through purification.

The modern ethnographic fascination with all things impure and polluted disregards the simple fact that the actual impact of purity regulations in any given society may be quite limited. Social life, to become tolerable, admits employment of different interpretative models to make different sense of the world in different situations. The superstitious man in Theophrastus' *Characters* (16) does not understand this principle: he begins his day with the ritual washing of his hands and the besprinkling of his body, and puts a piece of laurel wreath in his mouth. He purifies the house on a regular basis, fearing that the goddess Hecate may have taken possession of it by means of some hostile spell. He avoids contact with women in childbed and with death, and avoids even the sight of a tombstone so as not to contract a pollution. When he encounters someone else chewing garlic, he purifies himself and summons priestesses to circle him with a cathartic squill or puppy. As if all this were not enough, he participates in the Orphic Mysteries once a month, entailing further purificatory measures. The superstitious man whose life is dedicated to the desperate attempt to avoid any kind of ritual pollution is a caricature, meant as a criticism of unreasonable "superstitious" and improper social behavior. This example may serve to illustrate the point made at the beginning of this chapter, namely that "purity" and "pollution" ought to be understood as categories constructed in order to establish temporary differentiation – be it with regard to a biological condition, or a dietary or social practice. The object of that differentiation – be it the corpse, childbirth, or the chewing of garlic – may be classified as either "physically not polluted" or "ritually not pure." The classificatory model one is applying must depend (something the superstitious man has clearly misunderstood) on the respective situation and context. The separation between the two categories of "pure" and "polluted," maintained only within a given (ritual) situation, can and must be abandoned afterwards, if we wish to return to a normal life. For if only a situation prevailed in which every single exposure to a corpse, to childbirth, or to someone chewing garlic entails ritual pollution, everyday life in the Greek world would be passed with constant religious scruple and ritual purifications, and hence become unbearable.

The conceptualization of boundaries – both real and imagined – between the sacred and the secular realms – between purity and normality – is a matter of serious attention in Greek religion. Purity is associated with the sacred realm, whereas pollution occurs in the social world beyond its boundaries. Truth to tell, Greek mythology does not portray the gods as particularly pure beings; the shortcomings of their anthropomorphism are criticized already by Xenophanes of Colophon (frr. 166–72 Kirk/Raven/Schofield) in the sixth century BC. But the cult statues of gods are attended by temple personnel, who clean and wash them as part of the

temple's ritual routine. Greek purity regulations need not concern the "pure" gods who inhabit the sacred realm. The author of the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease*, written in the late fifth or early fourth century BC, expresses a widely shared sentiment about the separation of that realm from the world around it:

> the gods we ourselves build boundaries for their sanctuaries and sacred precincts in order that no one may transgress them unless he is pure [*hagneuein*], and, upon entering, besprinkle ourselves with water [*perirrainesthai*] not as people who defile [*miainesthai*] but who purify themselves [*aphagnieisthai*] from any pollution [*musos*] that we have contracted in the past. (Hippocrates, *On the Sacred Disease* 6, 364 Littré)

The very activities that characterize everyday life – birth, death, sexual intercourse, defecation, commerce, and others – are excluded from the sanctuary. The *rite de séparation* becomes a ritual necessity: purification by water upon entering a sanctuary is the most economical and hence routine *rite de passage*; we have already seen how the superstitious man uses that device to excess. In some cases, as in some mystery initiations or the Epidaurian incubation ritual, access becomes contingent upon a particular state of purity (*hagneia*), attained through a period of ritual fasting, and the abstention from certain animal foods and sexual intercourse. The actual religious event is marked by symbolically charged dress codes: white clothing, for instance, and the absence of the color black. But attaining such *hagneia* is intended to prepare for exceptional religious experiences; it is not necessarily part of religious routine in the Greek world.

In Greek purity regulations, however, purification on entering, as a ritual of demarcating the sacred realm, is only one prerequisite of access to the divine. The literary sources claim that general notions about the sources of pollution – such as childbirth, death, or homicide – were shared among many. But the details of purity regulations may differ from region to region or from city to city, and sometimes display differences in one and the same polis. The Greek *leges sacrae* or "sacred laws" preserve numerous instances which specify the, or some, common sources of ritual pollution, the time which has to pass before the polluted person may enter the sanctuary, and the required purificatory ritual. These sources can include childbirth or contact therewith, miscarriage or contact therewith, abortion, menstruation, sexual intercourse, either with one's own spouse or with the spouse of another person, the consumption of certain animal foods, contact with a corpse, or bloodshed. These prohibitions relate to ordinary worshipers; they display considerable variation with regard to the number of days that need to pass between the pollution and the purification ritual, the nature of that ritual, and the persons concerned. One might expect temple personnel, priests, and priestesses to obey requirements which go beyond these purity regulations; but that seems to hold true only in a minority of cases.

Several of these *leges sacrae* date to the hellenistic and Roman periods. In a significant number of these post-classical texts the prohibitions are related to immigrant cults such as Isis, Sarapis, Men, or the Syrian deities. Therefore, it must prima facie remain doubtful whether they are fully representative of Greek notions of purity and pollution, particularly in the archaic and classical periods. It would be misguided, however, to regard them as foreign to Greek religious thought, simply because they

do not belong to the cult of a "Greek" deity. For the view that these immigrant cults can be interpreted as "non-Greek" is no longer tenable: they are fully integrated into the infrastructure of Greek religion, and cult reality is often just as Greek as in the more traditional cults. There does exist, however, evidence which we can relate to a traditional deity of the Greek pantheon. A cathartic law from Cyrene, in its preserved form dating to the fourth century BC (and probably slightly older than that) and allegedly given by the god Apollo himself, deals with instances of ritual pollution similar to those in later cult regulations (*LSS* 115; Parker 1983:332–51). These instances include childbirth and contact therewith (the woman in childbed pollutes the entire household as well as those entering, but the pollution does not leave the house), miscarriage, sexual intercourse conducted by a male during the day, the choice of an inappropriate sacrificial victim, obligations related to a tithe, improper behavior of girls, of brides, and of wives during pregnancy, and finally homicide.

How can we come to an understanding of the social relevance of these purity regulations? In the anthropological literature on the topic, one can sense a tendency to naturalize the boundaries between the "pure," pollution and social normality. Or there is a tendency simply to reify native classifications. Representative of these approaches is Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger*, which interprets purity regulations as symbolic classifications reflective of the social classifications which prevail in society at large. Her definition of dirt as "matter out of place" and as "disorder" interprets ritual pollution – a property of the "betwixt and between" in Douglas' famous formulation – as the dialectical opposite of the orderly world of purity regulations (1966:2–6, 42, *passim*). Her definition relates these purity regulations to the larger realm of those categories that govern orderly behavior in the social world. In a structuralist tradition fascinated with the dichotomy of the "pure" and the "impure," this hypothesis proposes that social control is maintained through purity regulations, and that the latter are a natural extension of the former. Yet if that were true, one would need to assume that the purity regulations are regarded as natural categorizations by most and under all circumstances; otherwise they would not make a sufficiently valid contribution to the maintenance of social control. But is that really the case? Undoubtedly, the approach of *Purity and Danger* is not without heuristic value. For instance, the structuralist approach may appear helpful when it comes to the interpretation of childbirth or death in the family and the household: here, purity regulations might be seen as structuring, and thereby possibly releasing the stress exerted by, natural physical processes of the life-cycle such as childbed and death. And the notion of social control can highlight the fact that Greek purity regulations are far from innocent with regard to their addressing gender imbalances. The focus of the *leges sacrae* on childbirth, miscarriage, or abortion – from the fourth century, menstruation is also interpreted as a source of female pollution – entails that the male regulators of cult practice regarded the female body as particularly susceptible to pollution and hence in need of ritual regulation. Incidentally, this sentiment is shared by the Hippocratic writers. It must remain debatable whether the emphasis on childbirth, abortion, and menstruation reflects male concerns about increasing female emancipation in the social realm, in particular in the hellenistic and Roman periods (Dean-Jones 1995:225–53). It seems reasonable, however, to infer from these texts that the religious notion of a particular female ritual impurity reflects – and ritually

reifies – male conceptions about the role of women in Greek culture at large (Carson 1999; Cole 1992; Von Staden 1992).

The various kinds of pollution which the *leges sacrae* postulate as ritual pollutions are contracted beyond the boundaries of the sacred precinct. It is the sacred realm's perspective, not that of everyday life, which renders ordinary biological processes and social activities as pollutions, necessitating purification if one wishes to cross the line of constructed separation. How can that be? And how can we know whether these lines of constructed separation might have been regarded as natural categories? Surely, in their daily lives people would wish to have sexual intercourse, taste and consume different foods, and not want to incur the wrath of a vengeful god for transgressing purity rules on entering a sacred precinct. And they would by necessity give birth, menstruate, abort or miscarry, kill or otherwise come into contact with death, and not want to face the dire religious consequences of such activity.

An answer to our question may be found in several texts from western Asia Minor, dating to the Roman period. They dramatize the conflict between the requirements of the normality of everyday life and local purity regulations. A woman named Eutychis twice goes into the village in a state of ritual impurity before the god takes note and punishes her (*SEG* 6.250). In another incident, a person claims to have entered a shrine in a state of impurity, being unaware of the locally prevailing purity regulations (*MAMA* IV.288). A man with the name of Sosandros commits perjury and, thus polluted, nevertheless visits the temple (*Journal of Hellenic Studies* 10 [1889] 217 no. 1). A man called Aurelius Soterichos has sexual intercourse with a woman in the sacred precinct (*SEG* 6.251). All three are duly punished by the gods. A slave owned by the sanctuary of some local deities even manages to have sexual intercourse with three different women on three different occasions before the gods stop him (*SEG* 38.1237). These texts must not be read as claiming that no one ever obeys purity rules. Although very few may have equaled Theophrastus' superstitious man in his ritual punctiliousness, most must have had at least a rudimentary awareness of the various sources of ritual pollution that prevailed among them. But it is impossible to tell how many observed the time of seclusion which had to pass before they could again engage with others or even enter a sanctuary, if they had been affected by a ritual pollution. And it is untenable to assume that purity regulations were taken into account simply because they existed. To some, a simple purificatory ritual like besprinkling with water may have sufficed. Others, as the instances from Asia Minor suggest, may not have cared all that much or could always pretend not to know, until convicted by the gods.

These instances further suggest that, even if people generally may have wished to obey purity regulations, they seemed nonetheless prepared to contract a pollution seemingly without much religious scruple, if the situation demanded it. Sometimes, or so Aurelius Soterichos must have reckoned, the opportunity was simply too good to let it pass. It is only when misfortune strikes that our current misery is causally related to a past transgression; it then becomes "punishment by a god." The cause of one's present misfortune can always be explained as a pollution which one contracted in the past – there are many opportunities to overstep the constructed boundaries between the "pure" and the "polluted" – but which had lain dormant until now. It is in situations such as these that the religious category of ritual pollution can be used as a singularly satisfactory interpretative model. For if "pollution" is the answer to our

questions as to why we are suffering from the gods, it also entails the prospect of a solution to our misery: ritual purification and the return to a state of post-pollution normality. To the role of pollution and ritual purification in extraordinary situations we must now turn.

Pollution and Purification

Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* famously begins with disaster having struck Thebes: the crops are failing, women and cattle are unable to give birth, and a plague is spreading among the population. The city is suffering from a disease (*nosos*) for which no remedy can be found. Like the doctors during the Athenian plague of 430 BC, the Theban king Oedipus is at a loss as to the cause of the *loimos* that has struck his city. The king sends his brother-in-law to inquire of the Delphic oracle about the reason for these afflictions and about the correct procedures to ensure deliverance from them. In due course, Creon returns with an oracular response from Delphi: Phoebus Apollo commands that they drive out a pollution (*miasma*) which has been nourished in the city. Which pollution, Oedipus asks, and how can purification (*katharmos*) be procured? The answer that Creon has received from the oracle points to a causal chain of past events that the protagonists on the dramatic stage believe they can resolve: the murderer of the previous king Laius, and not an aerial pollution as suggested by the Hippocratic writers in the case of epidemics, is the *miasma*. *Miasma* is a result of homicide, or rather, the killer is the *miasma*, just as he is the cause of the city's sufferings and (as we shall see momentarily) a potential source of contamination to others. He must be hunted down and physically removed, that is, exiled or killed. Only then will Phoebus Apollo deign to deliver the Thebans and their city from their sufferings (*Oedipus Tyrannus* 82–125, 151–215). The god is using the affliction to remind the Thebans of their past negligence, namely their failure to seek revenge from the killer(s) of their once rightful king – a vengeance that Oedipus is going to seek on behalf of both the city and the god (126–41). It may be too strong a statement to say that the pollution is caused by "guilt" on the Thebans' part, but human responsibility for some past transgression (the failure of all to give proper care to their murdered king) cannot be denied.

A similar differentiation between pollution as the potential cause and its discernible negative effects is made elsewhere: The Dodonaeans inquire of their local Zeus: "Is it because of some mortal's pollution that we are suffering this storm?" (*SEG* 19.427). The Athenians, in the aftermath and because of a second outbreak of the plague in 427 (Thucydides 3.87), seek purification (*katharsis*) "in accordance with some oracle" in the winter of 426/5. Although the concrete political circumstances of this move remain disputed (Brock 1996), the purificatory ritual seems designed to propitiate: all graves on the (sacred) island of Delos are removed and neither birth nor death, as prime causes of ritual pollution, will be permitted on it in the future. In addition, the Athenians (re-)establish a penteteric festival for Delian Apollo (Thucydides 1.8.1, 3.104; Diodorus 12.58.6). Before, people had lived and died on the sacred island, and the categorical boundaries between the "pure" and normality had been violated; yet it is only after disaster has struck that the cause and its circumstances are investigated by the Athenians. Pertinent to the Sophoclean link between homicide

and pollution is the example of Epimenides, a legendary "purifier" (*kathartēs*) from Crete, who is said to have purified Athens from the Cylonian *agos* ("polluting curse"), the murder of Cylon and his supporters, around 600 BC ([Aristotle] *Athenaiōn Politeia* 1). The purification ritual proper follows the removal of the homicides, both those dead and those still alive, from Athens. Others make that "polluting curse" the cause of an epidemic (*loimos*) which is brought to a halt only when two young Athenians die a substitute death for their city (*FGrH* 457 T1 = Diogenes Laertius 1.110).

Modern discussions tend to portray pollution as the inevitable result of murder, not only affecting and haunting the culprit himself but also causing the immediate pollution of his fellow-citizens and the political community at large. If that were the case, why should the Thebans take the risk of displaying such negligence and fail to deal with their own polluted status, and why should they need reminding from Phoebus Apollo of what exactly the *miasma* is? Did they not know that Laius had died without revenge? Yet the textual basis for assuming a necessary and immediate causal link between homicide and pollution is meager. The so-called *Tetralogies* ascribed to Antiphon (late fifth century) may play with the idea that the homicide's polluted state is also polluting the city until the culprit is prosecuted and condemned (Parker 1983:103–7). But use of that idea in these courtroom exercises serves as an emotional frame and hence as a rhetorical means intended to manipulate – through exaggeration, as we shall see in a moment – the feelings and sentiments of the (hypothetical) Athenian jury. The idea must not be interpreted as directly reflecting Athenian legal practices and norms. Book 9 of Plato's *Laws* contains a discussion as to how different types of homicide necessitate different grades of pollution on the culprit's part. The Platonic ideal law-code differentiates between deliberate but justifiable homicide, in which case no state of pollution applies, accidental homicide, carrying no penalty but requiring some purification, other forms of involuntary homicide, for which only exile can serve as an adequate cathartic procedure, and parricide, when the only feasible measure is death followed by the subsequent mutilation of the unburied corpse (*Laws* 865a–869e). But the close link that Plato's law-code establishes between homicide and pollution should be read as the supplementary theological interpretation of the legal dimension of murder. His law-code becomes a morally loaded and thus distorted reflection of common legal norms and rules. By way of contrast, no strong notion regarding the polluting consequences of homicide can be found in the extant Attic Orators. And it is striking how any notion of pollution appears to be entirely absent from the extant Athenian legislation as preserved in Draco's law of homicide republished in 409/8 BC, which seems to be concerned largely with mitigating the legal consequences of involuntary or accidental homicide (*IG* i^2 115 = i^3 104 = M-L 86). Athens in the late fifth century seems not particularly preoccupied with identifying a polluting stain on the citizen body as the result of murder in the city. The penalty that the law prescribes, namely exile, can be avoided; nor does it carry the connotation of a cathartic measure as in the case of Plato's homicide "law" or in Sophocles' play.

In the case of homicide, pollution has to be made public in order to come into existence. The killer is not by default polluted, and hence not automatically a source of pollution to others, but rather free from it as long as he has not been declared a murderer. In the Athenian legal procedure, this happens by means of what is called

the *prorrhēsis*: the public announcement of the murderer's identity is accompanied by a solemn proclamation made by private citizens related to the victim, and hence entitled to vengeance (*IG* i^3 20–33; Demosthenes 42.57), and by the Archon Basileus. It is from this moment and throughout the period before the murder trial proper that the culprit is excluded from the lustral water distributed to wash one's hands before a sacrifice, from the libations and the mixing bowls, from the city's sacred shrines and its agora – in other words: from the community's religious, social, and political life (Demosthenes 20.158; Arnaoutoglou 1993:114–31). That this legal ritual of social isolation carries the connotation of being polluting – with regard to both the person accused of homicide and those coming into contact with him – finds its reflection in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The king's exhortation of his fellow-citizens to reveal to him the identity of Laius' murderer is followed by a quasi-formal *prorrhēsis*: no one in Thebes must give shelter to the homicide or address him, admit him to prayers to the gods and sacrifices or share the lustral water with him, for he is "our pollution" (236–42). Again, there is no immediate and necessary link between murder and pollution: the *prorrhēsis* makes the homicide an outcast and a potential source of pollution for the community. Social and religious marginalization and pollution are only quasi-juridical procedures, the social function of which must have been to make the accused seek resolution of his status and deter potential homicides by dramatizing the social as well as religious consequences of their wrong behavior.

In order to achieve resolution, the accused can stand trial, the result of which may be conviction or acquittal. He can attempt to negotiate a financial compensation with the victim's relatives. Or he can flee the country – though at the price of taking his pollution with him. In another city that homicide has to find a host willing to receive the polluted into his house and act as agent in the process of ritual purification. The Greek custom of receiving the murderer as a suppliant (*hikesios*) is attested as early as the *Iliad* (24.480–3). Herodotus narrates the story of Adrestus, who requests and receives purification from the Lydian king Croesus "according to the local customs," which is just as well since Greek and Lydian cathartic procedures are said to differ little in that respect (1.35). At Athens there seems to have existed a *nomos* – whether the word here denotes an actual statutory law or simply entails the existence of a "custom" is not entirely clear – that permitted the involuntary or accidental murderer to return home after a settlement had been reached with the victim's relatives; but his return was contingent upon prescribed rules of conduct, which included ritual purification and a sacrifice (Demosthenes 23.72). The available epigraphic evidence, though notoriously difficult to interpret, offers a window onto the various local cathartic procedures. The cathartic law from Cyrene demands that the local host present the foreign homicide to the community and announce his status as a suppliant. It is only then that the latter is entitled to undergo ritual purification. The host has the homicide sit on the threshold on a white fleece, and washes and anoints him. They go outside into the public road, observing silence while they proceed in the company of a herald to a place, probably a local public shrine, where the concluding sacrifice – itself no longer, it seems, part of the purificatory ritual proper – must be performed (*LSS* 115 B 50–9). In a law from Selinus, dating to the fifth century, a formal proclamation quite like the ruling in the Cyrene law is required before the cathartic procedures can begin. The host has the homicide wash himself with water and offers food and salt. Here, as in the Cyrene law, the purificatory ritual

proper seems to be followed by a concluding sacrifice: a piglet is offered to Zeus, possibly again on an altar belonging to a public temple, the possible implication being that the purified and others share in the subsequent consumption of the sacrificial meat.

The literary texts agree with these laws on the issue of silence which must be kept but introduce another variant: the suppliant is purified with the blood of a slaughtered piglet (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.693–4, 703–9, 720–3, 730). The ritual logic of this additional detail is explicable by the idea that bloodshed has to be purified with blood. It seems as though the literary texts further dramatize what must be a ritual procedure already out of the ordinary. In Aeschylus, it is the matricide Orestes, hunted by the Erinyes and in a state of manic frenzy, whom Apollo himself purifies with blood (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 280–3, 448–50; Sidwell 1996). We have seen how the exclusion of the homicide from the customary religious rituals of the community contingent upon the *prorrhēsis* not only signified his separation from society but also entailed his pollution. The rituals described here dramatize his subsequent reintegration. The purificatory ritual proper employs various symbolic elements connoting marginalization and its eventual resolution. It is followed by a sacrificial ritual which dramatizes the very fact that the homicide's marginalization within society has successfully been overcome. After the sacrifice of a piglet has been concluded, "he shall go away from his host, and turn around, and he shall be spoken to, and take food, and sleep wherever he wishes" (*SEG* 43.630 = *NGSL* 27, col. B 1–7). He is back to normality.

In real life, the homicide can be purified and possibly even return home; on the Sophoclean stage, purification of the city amounts to the homicide's banishment or death. The homicide, or rather parricide, is none other than Oedipus himself, who, in a vain attempt to escape from the oracle's earlier prediction, namely that he would slay his father and marry his mother, has inadvertently fulfilled that divine pronouncement. The king, by vowing to take revenge on the murderer and pronouncing the *prorrhēsis*, has sealed his own fate: as parricide, Oedipus' prolonged presence among his fellow-citizens does indeed pollute the city. The eventual self-inflicted exile formally fulfills the criteria set for purification by the Delphic oracle. In the purification of the Cylonian pollution at the hands of Epimenides, the removal of the culprit is also a prerequisite of successful ritual purificatory measures.

Epimenides also recommended that two Athenians commit suicide on behalf of the citizen body in order to end the epidemic. The incident, though probably a historiographical fiction, represents a case of what is sometimes, and rather misleadingly, called a "scapegoat ritual." The Greek word is *pharmakos*, from *pharmakon*, "healing remedy" or "medicine": *pharmakoi*, mainly attested in Ionia and in Athens, are expelled from the city as part of routinely recurring ritual procedures. Plutarch, when serving as archon in Chaironeia, performed such a routine ritual in person (693e–694b). At Athens, two men were annually driven out of the city during the festival of the Thargelia. Some literary sources claim that the *pharmakós* was expelled from cities not only during such annual festivities but in moments of crisis as well, in particular during epidemics (Hughes 1991:139–65). No historically verifiable instance of such a non-recurring application of the ritual pattern can be found in Greek culture; but several of the texts implicitly suggest that such an interpretation would have been entirely plausible to an ancient Greek audience. In Plutarch's

Chaironeia, a slave is driven out through the city gates while the crowd is chanting "out with *boulimos*, in with wealth and health," and the learned participants at one of Plutarch's table-talks agree that the word *boulimos*, which they do not quite understand, has the meaning of "great famine." While many of the details of the ritual remain unclear, there is a consensus about its basic meaning in the ancient texts. The ritual is cathartic: the sources interpret the expulsion measures as "purifications" of the respective cities and their citizens. Pollution may always accrue, and its cause often cannot be identified. The substitution of a "scapegoat" thus becomes a convenient ritual solution. If the occasion of the ritual is indeed an epidemic or a famine, its effect may be immediately apparent. But even if the ritual is celebrated as a routinely recurring event year after year, it does not matter: pollution may always lie hidden somewhere, waiting to be activated or purified. The *Oedipus Tyrannus* too has been interpreted in the light of such cathartic rituals. But Oedipus is not a *pharmakos* in the traditional sense. In the *pharmakos* ritual, the human purifications are selected to take the pollution on behalf of the citizens outside the city walls and thus restore the community to a state of post-pollution normality. Oedipus is no substitute but himself the *miasma* and the source of disaster.

Epilogue: Beyond Ritual Purity

Theophrastus' superstitious man summons the "priestesses" to purify him. With Epimenides from Crete we have encountered one professional "purifier" (*kathartēs*). The author of *On the Sacred Disease* introduces a related, though socially perhaps inferior, group of religious providers: the mages (*magoi*), "purifiers" (*kathartai*), charlatans and quacks who use purifications (*katharmoi*) and incantations to heal the "sacred disease," namely epileptic fits. The Hippocratic author imputes to them the ritual of purification by blood, "as if their patients carry a *miasma*, are haunted by vengeful spirits [*alastores*] or are under some spell"; yet they also advise ritual chastity and purity as means towards the desired medical cure (354–60 Littré). These "purifiers" find their counterpart in the so called *Orpheotelestai*, Orphic purifiers who purify injustices committed by the living and by their ancestors. According to Plato's hostile account, these purifications are the *teletai* which they promise will deliver us from all evil once we are in Hades (*Republic* 364b5–365a3). What this entails may be elucidated by the gold lamellae of Orphic-Bacchic origin, which purport to give the soul of the initiated privileged treatment in the underworld: "from the pure I come, pure myself. . . ." With the Orphic (or Orphic-Bacchic) *kathartai* and the new religious trends of the later fifth century and the fourth century, we reach a realm where purity and pollution no longer simply refer to the ritual exclusion of a *miasma* from a community. The concern about pollution appears here inexplicably linked to a mental, psychological, and spiritual dimension of bodily purity. This concern reaches its first culmination in Empedocles' *Katharmoi* and, later, in Plato's theological juxtaposition of morality and purity (McPherran 2002, 2004). This notion may at first seem a minority view. But the "purity of the mind," and not just of the body, can be found, from the later fifth century BC, in literary texts and the *leges sacrae* (Chaniotis 1997:152–72). The *Oedipus Tyrannus* too, which begins as a story about *miasma* as external defilement, develops into a drama of pollution as

visualization of the mental state of the protagonists. On the Athenian stage of the fifth century, the myth of the polluted matricide Orestes who is haunted by the vengeful Erinyes can be told as a story of the internalization of guilt and of mental disarray; Dionysiac ritual can lay claim to possessing cathartic measures against those very same mental illnesses (Scullion 1998). These are not simply evolutionary processes in the course of which a supposedly "archaic" notion of purity and pollution is being replaced by more enlightened views; almost all of the texts presented here date from the fifth century BC and later. The mental and the ethical dimensions of purity and pollution coexist with their ritual relevance as religious categories; they represent different yet non-exclusive Greek interpretative models.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Rohde 1925 still offers many pertinent observations about Greek notions of purity and pollution even though the book, first published in German in 1884, reflects the paradigm shifts of its time. Fehrle 1910 on ritual chastity, though reflective of the conceptualizations of religion in the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* around 1900, contains much useful material. Moulinier 1952 and Parker 1983 (second edition 1996) remain indispensable. The relevant entries in *RE* and *The New Pauly* may profitably be consulted. On purity in the *leges sacrae* and other Greek cult regulations, see Wächter 1910, Cole 1992, Chaniotis 1997, and Lupu 2004 (= *NGSL*). For the text from Selinus, see Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993, Clinton 1996, and Burkert 2000. On gender-related issues in the *leges sacrae*, see Cole 1992 and, more generally, Von Staden 1992, Dean-Jones 1994, and Carson 1999. On Apollo's advisory role in cases of *miasma*, see Dyer 1969. Hoessly 2001 provides a useful overview of the notion of *katharsis* in the Greek medical writers and in the religious cathartic tradition

Dirt, physical pollution, and disease, and their impact on the living conditions of ancient populations, have attracted justified attention: Hope and Marshall 2000 contains several contributions pertinent to the Greek material. On the problems of insufficient waste disposal, add Liebeschuetz 2000. For the medical writers' attitudes to urban pollution, see in particular Nutton 2000 and Magdelaine 2003. Lloyd 2003 discusses Greek intellectual attitudes towards disease from Homer to Aristotle and beyond, and offers useful insights into the relation between physical and ritual pollution. Ginouvès 1962 is a systematic treatment of bathing and washing in the Greek world, in both its secular and its sacred aspects.

For an anthropological interpretation of purity and pollution, see Douglas 1966 (with the reservations expressed above). It is instructive to compare the modified post-structural position in Douglas 1999. For other approaches, see Testart 1991:251–62, Burkert 1996:118–28 (emphasizing "the separation of what has been mixed up"), and Bendlin 1988–2001a and 1988–2001b.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Festivals

Scott Scullion

Greek calendars varied from city to city, but the twelve months were most often named after festivals, huge numbers of which were celebrated in the Greek world in the course of a year. Some festivals were common to Doric or Ionian cities, though these might take on a special form in a particular place, while others were unique to individual poleis or subgroups within a polis. A sacrifice and a banquet was normally the central event, and people would gather, often from afar, to attend. The two most common terms for "festival," *heortē*, which seems to be related to the word *eranos*, "banquet," and *panēguris*, "all-gathering," emphasize respectively these two central features. The particular combinations of divinities, rituals, etiological myths, and other elements that constituted individual festivals were almost infinitely various, but our knowledge of them is terribly limited by the paucity of our evidence. For the most part we have to content ourselves with odd scraps of ancient scholarship, often late – and sometimes confused or misleadingly abbreviated – summary of earlier scholarship, and with earlier and more reliable but almost always tantalizingly terse references in inscriptions and allusions in literature. Serious study of Greek festivals consists largely of painstaking analysis of the sources, and it will be more useful to discuss the reconstruction and interpretation of some festivals in detail than to give thumbnail sketches of many. At the end of the chapter I shall hazard some generalizations about a relatively neglected aspect of the study of festivals, the attitudes and experience of the general run of people taking part in them.

Evidence and Reconstruction: The Athenian Diasia

The troublesome nature of our evidence is best brought out by considering all the sources for a particular festival, and the Athenian Diasia makes a good and representative case study. According to Thucydides, when Cylon was advised by Delphi to seize the acropolis at Athens during "the greatest festival of Zeus" (1.126.4) he attempted

to do so during the Olympics and was unsuccessful, "for the Athenians also have a very great festival of Zeus Meilichios ["Zeus who must and can be propitiated"], the Diasia as it is called, held outside the city, at which the people *en masse* make many sacrifices not of ordinary sacrificial victims but of local offerings" (1.126.6). "Ordinary sacrificial victims" (*hiereia*) certainly means animals, and the scholion or ancient commentary on the passage plausibly explains "local offerings" as "cakes formed in the shape of animals." Hence it is surprising to find that in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (408–11) Strepsiades describes the explosion of the haggis (or perhaps black pudding) he was roasting for his relatives at the Diasia, and it was much more surprising when two inscriptions published in 1963 and 1983 clearly attested animal sacrifice at the Diasia. The mid-fourth-century sacrificial calendar of the deme Erchia (Sokolowski 1969: no.18a lines 37–42) contains this prescription: "In the month Anthesterion, at the festival Diasia, in the city at Agrai, to Zeus Meilichios a sheep, sacrificed without use of wine up to [the point at which] the innards [are roasted], costing 12 drachmae." A late fifth-century calendar of the deme Thorikos has a similar entry, also under the month Anthesterion: "At the Diasia, to Zeus Meilichios a sheep, to be sold" (*SEG* 33 [1983] 147.35). These four passages, together with Strepsiades' statement that he bought a toy cart for his son Pheidippides on the occasion of the Diasia (*Clouds* 864), are the sum of our evidence from the classical period. It is a typical dossier: brief allusions in drama and historiography, in the latter with very concise explanation for the benefit of non-Athenian readers, and some mention in inscriptions, typically involving only concrete details of offerings and procedures relevant to the normally quite narrow administrative (often financial) purposes of a state, deme, or private organization in drawing up the document. The Erchia inscription confirmed the old conjecture that the principal celebration of Diasia was at Agrai on the Ilissus, a location "outside the city" from the perspective of the Athenian Thucydides, "in the city" from that of the Erchians. The Thorikians, unlike the Erchians, celebrated Diasia in their own deme rather than at Agrai, which supports the assumption that Strepsiades is recalling a celebration in his own remote deme, Kikynna. As often, however, even this modicum of classical evidence also presents us with a quandary.

Was it or was it not usual to sacrifice animals at Diasia? The apparent implication of Thucydides' description is that animal victims were not sacrificed, but rather the inexpensive cakes (perhaps, as the scholiast suggests, in the shape of animals) that were a standard offering of those who could not afford animals, many of whom must have been present at this popular event. Perhaps all he means, however – though it is not a very obvious way of saying it – is that, in comparison with cakes, relatively few animals were sacrificed. The deme Erchia and doubtless other demes sent a delegation to Agrai with a sheep which was to be eaten. The procedure was different at Thorikos, where it is specified that the victim is "to be sold," which must mean (as Parker 1987b:145 suggests) that after the innards are eaten the flesh is not distributed or eaten but sold, presumably to a butcher. At Thorikos only the innards are eaten, and they are highlighted by the Erchian procedure; this perhaps coheres with Aristophanes' evidence for consumption of innards in the form of a haggis. Distinctive festival foods were certainly known – Athenian festivals such as Pyanepsia, Thargelia, and Galaxia take their names from vegetable porridges – and one might hazard the guess that haggis was the special dish of the Diasia, were it not that the meat of the Erchian offering was apparently eaten.

If new epigraphical evidence turns up it could change the picture as radically as that from Erchia and Thorikos has. Before those inscriptions refuted them, scholars concluded on the basis of holocaust ("whole-burnt") offerings to Zeus Meilichios attested by Xenophon (*Anabasis* 7.8.4), a good classical source, that animals sacrificed at Diasia were burnt whole. They sought support in the later evidence to which we now turn. Two scholia on the second-century AD writer Lucian (107.15 and 110.27 Rabe) and a notice in the probably fifth-century AD lexicon of Hesychius (delta 1312 Latte) tell us that Diasia was conducted "with a certain grimness." The older standard works on Athenian festivals present this as sound information ultimately derived from an authoritative source and as consonant with holocaust sacrifice for Zeus Meilichios (Mommsen 1898:423–4; Deubner 1932:155–6; and still Parke 1977:120). The second-century AD writer Plutarch, however, speaks of *hoi polloi* enjoying themselves and reviving their spirits at Diasia as at the Kronia and Panathenaea, "paying the price of purchased laughter to mimes and chorus-girls" (*On Contentment* 20; *Moralia* 477d), and Lucian has Hermes recall "splendid celebration of the Diasia" at the house of the rich Timon in the deme Kollytos (*Timon* 7). A dialogue falsely attributed to Lucian speaks of orators competing for ears of wheat at Diasia (*Charidemus* 1–3); this has been doubted, but such a competition might well form part of a program of entertainment such as Plutarch attests. There is no evidence for such entertainment in the classical period, but also no reason to assume that nothing of the kind was then laid on. Lucian himself has Zeus ask "why the Athenians have not celebrated the Diasia for so many years" (*Icaromenippus* 24). Lucian lived for a long time in Athens, so this should mean that the festival fell into desuetude (temporarily?) in the second century AD.

Some of what later writers such as Plutarch and Lucian tell us about festivals derives ultimately from earlier antiquarian scholarship, as does most of what we are told by scholiasts and lexicographers (who, however, also engage in inference and combination, often false, of their own). Among the richest repositories of such scholarship are the scholia on the comedies of Aristophanes, and a scholion on Strepsiades' mention of Diasia at *Clouds* 408 (Schol. vet. *Clouds* 408c) is our sole source both for the date of the festival (Anthesterion 23) and for the rather startling information that the late second-century BC writer on festivals Apollonius of Acharnae (*FGrH* 365 fr. 5) "distinguishes Diasia from the festival of Meilichios." That distinction cannot be justified, but what prompted Apollonius to make it (if indeed the scholion to *Clouds* is reporting him accurately) may have been a contrast between the jolly mood of Diasia – accurately witnessed or reported from sources by Plutarch and Lucian, with whose descriptions the haggis and toy-buying in Aristophanes seem consonant – and the holocaust and (wholly) wineless offerings attested for Zeus Meilichios on other occasions, and his ambivalent character, as reflected in his epithet, in general. Other antiquarians may have come to the more modest conclusion that, despite the apparent jollity of the festival, it must have been characterized by "a certain grimness," and Hesychius and the scholia on Lucian will be quoting them. The same scholion on *Clouds* 408 that gives us the date of the festival and quotes Apollonius of Acharnae concludes with the statement "but the Diasia are the same as the Dipolieia [the festival of Zeus Polieus]," which is wholly unaccountable misinformation. Such a blend of the sound, the baffling, and the absurdly unsound is typical of ancient scholia and lexica, and so alas typical also of a large part of our evidence for Greek festivals.

The testimonia to the Diasia are a typical mix of the various kinds of sources we have for Greek festivals. Newly discovered artifacts and inscriptions often cast light on some aspect of the subject from a quarter apparently unknown to ancient scholarship – though in doing so they also remind us how much is still in darkness and how deceptive our obscured vision can be. Diasia is a relatively simple case. As the quantity of our sources increases so, on the whole, does our knowledge – but so too do the number and complexity of our problems of interpretation. Let us turn to a case that illustrates these.

Interpreting Festivals: The Spartan Karneia

There are fashions in the study of festivals as in other branches of scholarship. Contemporary concern with gender and sociology is producing rich insights. Postwar anthropological and comparative approaches focusing on ritual and myth culminate in the important work of Burkert. The agricultural and magical interests of nineteenth-century anthropology are central to the older standard works on Greek festivals. Even this last approach still figures prominently in some recent work, most of which is in fact eclectic – and rightly so, as none of these lines of approach is dispensable. All of them have something to reveal about virtually any festival, and some festivals lend themselves to study primarily by one or other of them.

We know most about the festivals of Athens, but let us break out of our besetting Athenocentricity and consider the Dorian Karneia in honor of Apollo Karneios ("Apollo of the Ram"), best known for precluding the waging of war and thus for causing the Spartans to arrive too late at the battle of Marathon (for this festival see further Chapter 15). In the second century BC Demetrius of Scepsis (quoted by Athenaeus 141e–f) described the Karneia as an "imitation [*mimēsis*] of military training [*agōgēs*, that is of the famous Spartan form of education]. For there are nine positions and these are called 'sunshades' because they have a certain resemblance to tents. Nine men dine in each of them, everything is done at announced commands, and each 'sunshade' contains representatives of three phratries ['brotherhoods']. The festival of the Karneia lasts for nine days." Hesychius and other lexicographers provide us with further information. Five unmarried men from each tribe (*phylē*? – the word is missing: there were three tribes) were allotted the liturgy, that is, official responsibility for laying on the festival, for a period of four years, the so-called Karneatai. It seems to have been some of these who took part in a kind of footrace under the name *staphylodromoi*, "grape-cluster runners." They chase a single runner festooned with fillets of wool, and it is a good omen for the city if they catch him, a bad omen if they do not – though there is the let-out that he is meant to pray for the good of the city before or as he runs. Mixed dancing by boys and girls and above all choral song and dance also formed part of the program. A number of etiological myths are associated with the festival. The most influential in scholarship has been Pausanias' story that the cult was established to propitiate Apollo for the murder of his prophet Karnos by one of the Herakleidai, the Dorian descendants of Heracles, when they were conquering the Peloponnesos (3.13.4).

The various interpretations of this festival exemplify trends in the study of festivals over the last hundred years. Wide (1893:73–85), in the long-standard work on

Spartan cults, took the view that the central theme of the Karneia was not military – that is only Demetrius' arbitrary judgment – but agricultural. Pointing to a European harvest custom of chasing (and sometimes killing) an animal or a man representing an animal and to the clusters of grapes in the name *staphylodromoi* he concluded that the single runner stood for the Vegetation Daemon, whose pursuit and capture was an act of analogical harvest magic. Farnell (1896–1909:4.261–3) accepts Wide's basic interpretation, but revises it in the spirit of the "Cambridge School" anthropology of James Frazer and Jane Harrison. On this view the power of the god resides in the runner as counterpart of Apollo's ram, the "theanthropic animal"; his pursuers will touch him with the grape clusters "so that these being impregnated with his virtue, the whole of the vintage may prosper." Farnell also allows, however, on the basis of a hoplite dance attested for the Karneia at Cyrene and the title "Leader of the Host" (*Hagētōr*) shared by god and priest in the Argive Karneia, that the military theme identified by Demetrius must have been present. Nilsson (1906:118–24) too treats the Karneia as a primarily agricultural festival, but on the basis of the myth of Karnos he also regards it as expiatory. These interpretations have in common a narrow focus on the chase and one of the myths to the almost complete exclusion of the other components of the festival, and it is easy to see now that this has everything to do with the dominance of the then fashionable interpretative model.

For Burkert there is at the heart of Greek religion a complex of guilt and atonement for killing that goes back to the earliest human hunters, and his account of Karneia (1985:234–6) is just as clearly driven by his leading interpretative idea as earlier scholars' interpretations were by theirs. By claiming that the wool fillets will have "handicapped" the single runner – and by ignoring the grape clusters apparently carried by the pursuers, surely a much greater handicap – Burkert makes of him a "victim" who "displays willing acquiescence." In this way the runner is assimilated to the willing animal victims, such as cattle that "offer themselves" for sacrifice by eating grain on an altar, which on Burkert's theory play a role in a "comedy of innocence" that displaces responsibility for their destruction from their human sacrificers to themselves. Burkert then equates the runner with the ram sacrificed at the festival – as in Farnell's interpretation, but on an entirely different conceptual basis. The equation is based on an analogy with a story in Herodotus of the sacrifice of a man "covered in fillets of wool" to Zeus Laphystios in Thessaly; the man was a descendant of Phrixos, who had once been saved from sacrifice through the appearance of the golden ram, to which his complete covering in wool assimilates the human victim. Thus "the fillet-draped runner at the Karneia and the ram represent each other, as is hinted in the Phrixos myth" (Burkert 1985:235). This is all rather arbitrary: the runner at the Karneia is not "completely covered" in wool fillets, which anyway have a variety of ritual functions in the Greek world, and neither Herodotus' tale of a human sacrifice in Thessaly nor the myth of Phrixos have any connection with the Karneia. Burkert goes on to consider the Karnos myth and other etiological stories representing the foundation of the Karneia as a form of atonement for some crime preceding a military victory. "Ancient guilt," Burkert concludes, "is associated with the festival, and is made present in the race and the ram sacrifice, but at the same time the ritual atones for the guilt; and therefore the warriors can march out to conquer all the more freely; the violence and bloodshed of the conquest can no longer be charged to their account. For this reason no war may be waged during the

Karneia: the festival creates the preconditions for unbridled expeditions of war'' (1985:236). This interpretation has a certain appeal, as there is clearly something in the notion that abstention from war during a festival replete with military motifs must be in a significant rhythmic relationship with the waging of war. Apart from that important insight, however, Burkert's thesis seems strained. Accounting for the foundation of a cult by representing it as atonement for a past crime against the relevant god – in the case of Karnos, the slaying of Apollo's prophet – is a very common etiological device. There is by contrast no reason to suppose that such a foundation can atone *prospectively* for a military triumph, which is not a thing that inevitably requires atoning for, nor that any ritual act can banish responsibility for future acts of bloodshed. Here again, then, the ''comedy of innocence'' is being imposed by force upon the evidence.

Jeanmaire (1939:524–6) had interpreted Karneia as a festival of initiation, which gives due prominence to the primary role of young men in the organization and rites of the festival. We should be inclined nowadays to make much of this sociological side of Karneia. The representation of phratries by the men in the ''sunshades'' and of the tribes (if that supplement is right) by the Karneatai means that the festival reflects the structure of Spartan society, and so constitutes a religious warrant for that structure. We might say indeed that social and festival organization are mutually warranting; that is generally true, but spectacularly so in Sparta, the author of whose laws, Lycurgus, was worshiped as a god (Herodotus 1.65–6). It is also important that young males, probably adolescents, are the central actors in the ritual and that they rather than the men in the ''sunshades'' have liturgical responsibility for the festival. Karneia is in fact one of a series of Spartan festivals in which adolescent boys figure prominently. They performed as choristers at the Hyakinthia and Gymnopaidiai, and at a festival (if it was a festival) of Artemis Orthia formed two teams, the one attempting to steal cheeses from the altar while the other beat them back with switches (Xenophon, *Spartan Constitution* 2.9; Plutarch, *Aristides* 17.8). All these activities were components of the famous Spartan *agōgē* or ''training,'' but does it make sense to speak with Jeanmaire of Karneia as a festival of ''initiation''? Initiation worthy of the name ought to effect a definitive transition from one status to another, as it does in mystery cult, but we have no reason to believe that Karneia or any other of the festivals we have mentioned marked such a transition; Karneia cannot have done so, as the Karneatai performed the liturgy for four years. The festivals no doubt functioned as markers on the road from adolescence to adulthood, but the term ''initiation'' soon ceases to be useful if it is applied indiscriminately to any rite involving adolescents. There is also the problem that very few members of any age cohort can have served as Karneatai, who were only fifteen in number and served four-year terms. It is surely better to think of them not as initiates but as representatives of their age-groups and tribes in a long-running Spartan program of self-representation and self-definition.

Athenaeus preserves a splendid anecdote about a visitor to Boeotia who is puzzled by the local custom of garlanding and sacrificing Copaic eels and asks someone about it. ''The Boeotian said that he knew one thing only about the matter, and asserted that the ancestral customs must be observed and that there is no need to account for them to others'' (297d). No doubt we would get a similar reply from one of the Karneatai if we asked him whether he understood the single runner to be a vegetation daemon or a ram offering himself for slaughter. Ritual appeals primarily by requiring

us on grounds of tradition to do this set of special things rather than another, and Athenaeus' Boeotian was surely not unusual in his lack of interest in the meaning of it all. No doubt the local Boeotian schoolteacher would have been happy to answer the visitor's question, and it must primarily have been such local antiquarians who preserved and indeed generated etiological stories. Schoolchildren in modern Greece are taught the lore of the local festivals, but teachers tell me that very few of them retain any of it, despite attending the festivals regularly throughout their lives. Of course the etiological stories themselves are generally no more than quaint pseudo-explanations that dress the ritual up in narrative or conceptual clothing for those who want an explanation. Burkert's notion of etiological myths as "having grown from the experience of participants at the festival" (1985:227), if that means the general run of participants, must rarely apply. The impenetrably obscure origins and meaning of the rites at many Greek festivals must have been precisely what prompted the generation of the many aetia, such as that of Karnos the prophet, that involve no analysis of the rites as such but simply represent the whole ritual complex as coming into being at once as an atonement for some offence or a commemoration of some event or person. This accounts for the rites, but in the sense of authorizing or authenticating rather than (in our sense) explaining them. Sometimes, however, etiological myths have more to tell us about the festival than those of Karneia do, and so become central to interpretation. Let us consider a festival of which this is the case.

Festival and Aetion: The Athenian Oschophoria

We have two accounts of the Athenian festival Oschophoria, "carrying of vine shoots with grape clusters," one of them summarized by Plutarch in his *Theseus* (23.2–4) from the fourth-century BC Atthidographer Demon (*FGrH* 327 fr. 6), the other found in a much later handbook (Proclus *Chrestomathia* quoted in Photius, *Library* 239, 322a). The festival involved a procession from "the Dionysiac sanctuary" in Athens to that of Athena Skiras in Phaleron which was led by two youths dressed as women and carrying a vine shoot with grape clusters on it. These were followed by a chorus singing the "oschophoric songs" named after the festival, and by female *deipnophoroi*, "meal-bearers." Ephebes, Athenian cadets, representing their tribes, competed in racing. Aristodemus, a second-century BC Alexandrian commentator on Pindar, is the earliest of two sources to say that they carried the grape clusters in the race (*FGrH* 383 fr. 9), which must be a result of confusion with the race at the Spartan Karneia, and, unlike the other source, he places the race at the festival Skira, a confusion obviously caused by Athena's epithet. This is a salutary warning that negligent error can impair the tradition early and catastrophically, which will not have happened only in cases where we are able to detect the error.

Demon's etiological story is about the seven youths and seven maidens to whose lot it fell to go as Athenian tribute to the Minotaur. For two of the maidens Theseus substituted courageous youths with girlish faces; he changed their appearance by giving them warm baths, keeping them in shade, and rubbing unguents on their skin, and taught them to walk, speak, and dress like girls. When they all returned safely from Crete Theseus and the two youths founded the rite ("as we know it" is the implication) in gratitude to Dionysus and Ariadne, in whose honor they carry

the grape clusters – or perhaps they do that, Demon says, because they returned to Athens during the harvest. The *deipnophoroi* are imitating the mothers of the youths and maidens, who brought them food during the period of preparation for the voyage. Myths are told at the festival, and this is because the mothers would comfort and encourage the children by telling them myths. Proclus' handbook does not tell the story of the youths substituted for maidens, but simply says that Theseus instituted the rite on his return, using two youths "who had been kept in shade" as assistants, in gratitude to Athena and Dionysus (rather than Dionysus and Ariadne).

A number of interesting conclusions, or at any rate plausible hypotheses, suggest themselves. It is remarkable first of all how very *narrative* the explanation of the festival is, resembling not at all the sort of thing that modern scholars, with their focus on ritual, would want to say about it. Aspects of the festival program susceptible to association with the story, the *deipnophoroi* for example, are explained commemoratively, as mothers feeding their children, rather than functionally, as women carrying provisions for sacrifice and feast, easy and obvious though the latter explanation would be. The ritual program as such, no doubt because it seemed unaccountable, comes in simply as a given, warranted by the fact of its foundation by Theseus. The grape clusters, Demon suggests, may be carried because it was vintage season – good evidence for a native line in harvest-festival interpretation – but that is an afterthought. The primary explanation is based on the simple equation "vine = Dionysus," and Demon is so carried away by the narrative that he brings in Dionysus and Ariadne from the myth as recipients of Theseus' gratitude to the exclusion of the festival honorand Athena, who does not figure in Theseus' Cretan adventures. Proclus' source, who is not such an enthusiastic storyteller, remembers Athena, bringing Dionysus in but naming him in second place, and leaves out Ariadne, the one of the three to whom Theseus most obviously owes gratitude. This is a specially clear illustration of the tendency of narrative, including etiological narrative, to take on a life of its own, and it is sobering to reflect that a fourth-century Atthidographer (whom there is no reason to think Plutarch is misrepresenting) can so far forget the etiological purpose of his story as to leave the principal divinity out of it. Or should we perhaps put it another way: etiology was not for the Greeks the thoroughly allegorical correlate of ritual that we, in our thirst for evidence, would like it to be and too often treat it as being. At any rate, those scholars can hardly be right who treat Demon's tale as a good argument for the view that Dionysus had an important place in the festival.

It is generally held that we have here a rare attestation of the telling of myths at a festival. We note that what is related are "myths" rather than "the myth." If "the myth," this or another etiological myth, had been related, it seems doubtful that that would have produced the etiological motif of the mothers telling stories to their children. This is much more natural as a reflection of the telling of a variety of myths, and is probably accounting for the oschophoric songs, which, if they were like the songs performed at Athenian festivals in general, will not normally have been on an Oschophoric theme, but on a wide range of mythical subjects. Perhaps then this is an aetion of a normal choral component of Greek festivals rather than of an unusual reading of a relevant myth. It is important to take the implications of this fully on board. We have canvassed the possibility that most people attending a festival will not have recollected in any detail its etiological myth or myths, and it seems clear that no

opportunity was provided at the festival to recite them. The variation of "myth" and "myths" is itself significant. We often know more than one aetion for a given festival, and many festivals doubtless had several. Four aetia for various cultic activities at the sanctuary at Brauron on the east coast of Attica are attested, three in late lexicographers and one in Euripides. The later three all have to do with the *arkteia*, the famous ritual in which small girls "played the bear" for Artemis; this common reference produces a certain convergence in the aetia, but they are very different, and there is no reason to believe that one of them must have been original and authoritative. Evidently etiological myth was a true scion of Greek mythology and so anarchically multiform. To judge by extant dithyrambs and dramas one would be more likely to hear an aetion of a festival recounted in a tragedy than at the relevant festival itself. The whole business of etiology was perhaps much less official than we sometimes assume, a creation largely of antiquarians and poets that had no authoritative status in cult.

There is another suggestive cultural motif to be culled from the aetion of Oschophoria. Demon regards the grape clusters as straightforwardly cultic, either an attribute of Dionysus or first fruits of his crop, and so does not attempt to account for them mythically. He treats the ritual tranvestism very differently, however, as his dilation on the youths' disguise makes plain. The choice of a myth of Theseus was doubtless deliberate, perhaps because his return to Athens from Crete and consequent thank-offerings to Apollo were located in Phaleron (Plutarch, *Theseus* 22.2–4), perhaps also – but this is uncertain – because the Oschophoria were celebrated in the same month Pyanepsion in which Plutarch places Theseus' return to Athens, or even on the same or the preceding day (7 or 6 Pyanepsion). It required real ingenuity to connect the transvestism with the myth of Theseus by turning two of the seven maidens into disguised youths, and the natural inference is that this ritual element was driving the generation of the most distinctive features of the aetion. Modern scholars speak easily of ritual transvestism, but this was evidently the aspect of the rite that the ancient etiologists were keenest to account for as commemoration, which may well mean keen to neutralize as ritual behavior. Demon's elaborate description of the youths' transformation, and the minimalist version of Proclus, who confines himself to the detail of their pallor, are probably varying responses to the same discomfort with the transvestism of the ritual. If this is right, it is useful to know that they regarded transvestism in a ritual context as strange and reacted to it so strongly.

This very intriguing festival is beset with problems both of reconstruction and of interpretation. There are striking resemblances to the Karneia – not only the young men in military training, the race, and the choral song, but the grape clusters. The older view was that both were harvest festivals. The carrying of the grape clusters is what gives the Oschophoria its name, and the festival takes place at the right sort of time to celebrate the end of the grape harvest in the autumn, as Demon is aware. Burkert (1985:235, 441 n. 22) denied that the Karneia was a harvest festival on the grounds that it took place two months earlier than Oschophoria. This kind of objection is frequently used to dissociate festivals from agricultural concerns, but the grapes will have been almost ready for harvest in the month Karneios and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that that is a relevant fact, even if Spartan males did not stoop to agricultural labor. That Oschophoria is at least partly agricultural in theme is suggested also by the connection with Dionysus. That, however, raises a tricky problem.

The procession goes to the sanctuary of Athena Skiras in Phaleron where the "dinner" and the race must have taken place, and she is clearly an honorand of the festival, but does it also honor Dionysus, from whose sanctuary the procession departs? An inscribed arbitration document of the clan (*genos*) of the Salaminioi published in 1938 (Sokolowski 1962: no. 19) threw a flood of light on Oschophoria and on this question. "Skiras" is said to be an old name of Salamis, and there was a major cult of Athena Skiras there. It emerged that the clan of Salaminians met in the goddess's sanctuary in Phaleron, provided her priestess, and was responsible for choosing the *ōschophoroi* and *deipnophoroi* for the festival. That seems to put the festival squarely in Athena's column, especially when one observes that there is no offering to Dionysus in the sacrificial calendar of the Salaminioi incorporated in the inscription, and that the antiquarian tradition does not even know from which of the Athenian sanctuaries of Dionysus the procession sets out. Nevertheless scholars still resist the conclusion, pointing to the grapes, the transvestism, and the cry *eleleu* (which Plutarch, *Theseus* 22.4, tells us was given over the festival libations) as unmistakably Dionysiac. There is in fact nothing very Dionysiac about *eleleu*, which is a war-cry or a cry of pain. Ritual transvestism is often said to be distinctively Dionysiac, but there is very little early evidence for transvestism in cult of Dionysus apart from this festival, whose principal honorand was certainly Athena. There is abundant evidence in the form of surviving masks for people disguising themselves in the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Sparta, and in the Greek world what can certainly be described as ritual transvestism was not confined to the cult of a single god (Nilsson 1906:369–74). That leaves the grapes, which surely account for the departure from a sanctuary of Dionysus, but this is very much a secondary feature. It seems possible that Athena Skiras, as special goddess of Salamis or of the clan, might be associated with the prosperity of the fruits of the earth just as the principal festival of Zeus Polieus, Dipolieia, is much concerned with the plow-ox and he is sometimes the honorand, with or instead of Demeter, of the Proerosia, "pre-plowing," festivals of the Attic demes. The Salaminioi sacrifice a pregnant sheep to Athena Skiras (Sokolowski 1962: no. 19 line 92), a victim otherwise offered in the Greek world only to goddesses (and one heroine) associated with fertility. At any rate the primary role of Athena in the rite must limit the degree to which we can foreground the vinous aspect of the festival, as the more prominent we make this the stranger it becomes that Dionysus is not the sole or primary honorand. It is therefore self-defeating to press the argument from the grapes to produce a more prominent role for Dionysus. Perhaps the vine branch with clusters is just a conveniently portable specimen of the fruits of the earth that was available at the season of Athena's festival, but that made a secondary link with Dionysus natural.

These problems in the interpretation of the festival may be illuminated by a neglected detail in the etiological accounts of Demon and Proclus. Demon speaks of Theseus keeping the two youths in shade, and the only description Proclus gives of Theseus' two assistants at the original rite is that they had been kept in shade; the noun in Demon and the verb in Proclus are from the same Greek root. Paleness was regarded as a characteristic of women kept, as by Athenian mores they ought to be kept, out of public gaze, and vase-painters sharply distinguish pale women from tanned men. Women would sometimes make themselves up with white lead, and we know that the maiden *kanēphoroi*, "basket-bearers," who led the magnificent procession of

the Panathenaea festival wore an application of white make-up (Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* 732 with Hermippus fr. 25 K-A). The epithet under which Athena is honored at Oschophoria, Skiras, is related in ancient sources to *skiros*, a white clay or chalk that could be used as an unction: a scholion on Aristophanes (*Wasps* 926) tells us that "Athena is called Skiras because she is anointed with white chalk [*leukēi*]." This may be mere inference from the epithet, but it may not be. That Proclus specifies precisely the paleness of the *ōschophoroi* and that alone, and that the same detail shows up in Demon's aetion and so is probably owed by both to a common source, makes it very tempting indeed to conclude that the *ōschophoroi* were made up with the white clay *skiros*, and that this was connected with Athena Skiras. If that is so, the transvestism here very probably has to do with Athena Skiras rather than Dionysus – unless the white clay alone was the ultimate basis of the idea that they were "dressed like women," in which case "transvestism" might not be the relevant concept.

We can perhaps go a little further. Passages in classical comedy and inscriptions refer to a festival Skira which they treat as a women's festival comparable to Thesmophoria and Stenia, and one would naturally infer that like them it honored Demeter. Philochorus tells us that at the festival "they ate garlic with a view to abstaining from sex, so that they would not smell of perfume" (*FGrH* 328 fr. 89). Athenian writers on festivals, however, and in particular Lysimachides in the first century BC or first century AD, reported of Skira "that the *skiron* is a large sunshade under which the priestess of Athena, the priest of Poseidon, and the priest of Helios walk as it is carried from the acropolis to a place called Skiron" (*FGrH* 366 fr. 3). Lysimachides is quoted by the second-century AD lexicographer Harpocration, who is explaining an occurrence of the word *skiron* in the fourth-century orator Lycurgus, but Lycurgus may simply have used the word rather than defined it, and so there is every possibility that Lysimachides' definition and explanation of it differed from the orator's. Helios, "Sun," was not worshiped in Athens until the hellenistic period, and the version of the festival that Lysimachides reports must therefore be post-classical. This is all very difficult indeed to reconcile with the early evidence for Skira. We note the sunshade, and think of that motif in our evidence for the Oschophoria. Is this a confused description of the Oschophoria procession in its hellenistic form? Poseidon certainly had a sanctuary in or near the port of the Piraeus, and may well have done at the neighboring harbor of Phaleron. Did its priest perhaps come up from Phaleron to accompany the procession down from Athens? The initial vowel of the festival name *Skĭra* is short, that of the word for white clay, *skīros*, long, but this may well have been insufficient to hinder a later antiquarian from equating them. Lysimachides (or his ultimate source) was in any case over-explaining the name of the festival, by means both of *skiron* the sunshade and Skiron the place. An abundance of *skir-* words certainly caused the scholars confusion. A scholion on Pausanias (1.1.4) derives the name Skirophoria (the full, older name of the festival: "Bearing of *Skiron/Skira*") from "the bearing at the festival by Theseus of *skira*, or of chalk, for when Theseus went away to deal with the Minotaur he made an image of Athena of chalk and took it with him." Here the word for chalk is *gypsos* rather than *skiros*, but the suggestion must originally have been inspired by *skiros*, even though the vowel quantity proves that that word cannot be the source of Skirophoria or Skira. The number and variety of the scholars' guesses – chalk unction on the goddess' face, a chalk image of the goddess, Skiron as a place and *skiron* as a sunshade – indicates that something had

gone very wrong with the tradition, that they were groping for an answer, and that false quantities were no obstacle to conjecture. *Skiron* as sunshade may be merely another garbled reflex of the pallor-producing clay *skiros*. Perhaps when the role of the unction had dwindled in the tradition to a mere reference to shade its proper name was transferred to the sunshade, whose function in the procession was to reinforce the pallor motif. Of course certainty is impossible, but there can be no doubt that the tradition is deeply confused, and no doubt either that the later notices purporting to give an account of a procession at Skira are completely at odds with the classical evidence for that festival. It is no serious obstacle to our hypothesis that the procession sets off in the one account from "the Dionysiac sanctuary" ("the sanctuary of Dionysus" in two lexicographers) in the other from "the acropolis." They could be equivalent, a sanctuary of Dionysus near the Acropolis, but both descriptions are so vague – which of the sanctuaries of Dionysus? which of the sanctuaries in or near the Acropolis? – that one suspects them of being antiquarian guesswork, feeble substitutes for the specific location that would have been named by someone who was not guessing. The Acropolis will have been inferred from the prominence of Athena, the sanctuary of Dionysus from the prominence of the vine.

There are useful conclusions to be drawn from the study of etiology, and some of the most important of them are negative. Modern scholars are in the line of the ancient antiquarians; they too seek explanations, if of a different sort, and some of their explanations may indeed get at the origins and original meanings of the rites. We have guessed that it will have been a small minority of Greeks who bothered themselves about the origins of festivals, and that even such simple modes of explaining their rituals as the antiquarians employed were dispensed with not only by Athenaeus' Boeotian but by most Greeks. That may be too venturesome, but still it is possible to wonder whether we would not learn more about the experience of most celebrants by attending to obvious things, to aspects of festivals that tend not to attract the attention of either ancient or modern scholars. The content and tone of the reference to a festival in the text of Aristophanes – Strepsiades, say, recalling the exploding haggis and the toy he bought for Pheidippides at Diasia, or "Lesser Logos" using the Dipolieia festival as a byword for outmoded nonsense (*Clouds* 984–5) – may be more instructive than the account of the rites and the aetion in the scholion – the claim that Diasia was conducted "with a certain grimness." What, for the average Greek, was the festival experience all about?

The Festival Experience

Democritus said that "a life without festivals is a long road without inns" (B 230 D-K). The Thucydidean Pericles says of the Athenians in his funeral oration that "we have provided the greatest number of opportunities for the relief of the mind from its toils, establishing the custom of holding contests (*agōnes*) and sacrifices throughout the year" (2.38.1). Plutarch speaks of Pericles "giving the reins to the people . . . always devising some festival spectacle or feast or parade in the city and 'entertaining them like children with not unrefined pleasures' (a quotation from a comedy)" (*Pericles* 11.4). Relaxation, jollification, entertainment are the keynotes, not heightened religious consciousness or feats of energetic piety.

Aristophanic comedy sounds the same note. The women who went apart from the men around the time of the autumn sowing to celebrate Thesmophoria must have been aware that they were not only worshiping Demeter but somehow fostering the regeneration of living things, the "Fasting" (*Nēsteia*) of the second day of the festival promoting by contrast the "Fair Birth/Generation" (*Kalligeneia*) sought or celebrated on the third. They may have interpreted the obscene jokes and insults they exchanged in the same way, though their functional role was no doubt to foster female bonding: there is a Russian tradition that two people switching to the use of the second person singular ritualize the change by drinking a toast with linked arms and whispering obscene words in one another's ears. Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* ("Women Celebrating the Thesmophoria") treats the festival merely as an opportunity for women to drink and to conspire against the tragedian Euripides, who gives away their secrets and stratagems; likewise Aristophanes' "Women in Assembly" (*Ecclesiazusae*) have conspired at the women's festival Skira to seize political power in Athens. That is undoubtedly a male, not merely a comic, perspective, but festivals in general are treated with a persistent light-heartedness that it seems unjustified to attribute solely to the comedic context. In *Peace* Theoria, the attractive female personification of "state delegation to international festivals" is restored to the members of the Athenian Assembly amid much sexual humor as a pledge of the delights of peace. In *Acharnians* Dikaiopolis celebrates his separate peace with the Spartans by organizing his own rural Dionysia. It is not just, then, that festivals are mentioned in a light-hearted way, but that festivals are an obvious symbol of peace, of fun and food. Aristophanes and the Thucydidean Pericles, each in his own idiom, are saying the same thing about festivals, and it is rather different from the sort of thing one gathers from the handbooks.

Scholarly discussion of non-ritual activities at festivals is never proportionate to what the evidence we have been examining suggests is their centrality to the experience of festivals. There is only so much one can say about people eating and drinking, dancing and flirting, watching parades and contests and shows – "a good time was had by all" was the formula in the social columns of the old small-town newspapers. For most of those attending a festival its primary attraction will not have been what made it unique but the kind of thing that it had in common with others. To give a full account of a festival is no more possible than to write the history of a ball, but we can try to right the balance a little by paying closer attention to the common elements.

Dramatic, choral, and athletic contests are the most obvious common features. The works composed for the choral and dramatic competitions at Athens generally have little or nothing to do with the festival's god or ritual, though it has been popular in recent decades to expand the definition of ritual to encompass these works – an expansion that for some of us makes the term "ritual" as unhelpfully vague as "initiation" has become. These works are concerned with the cultural inheritance, including the religious inheritance, as a whole, which is another indication that a narrow focus on their distinctive ritual and etiological particularities may distort our perception of festivals. Athletic competitions, like dramatic and choral ones, rarely have more than a superficial relationship to the distinctive religious concerns of a festival – the victor in the torch race, for example, lighting the altar of Athena at Panathenaea – and generally have none. Though contests have little or nothing to do with the cultic elements of a festival, they are nevertheless of enormous cultural

importance, and R. Osborne (1993) is surely right to stress that their competitive aspect is valued by the polis for the impetus it gives to ambition.

Contests are always at least mentioned in studies of the festivals, but other activities and entertainments often go unnoticed altogether, understandably only in the sense that they are rarely noted by the ancient sources. "One might judge a market or a festival as poorly or well organized," says Demosthenes, on the basis of "the abundance and cheapness of the things for sale" (10.50), which must mean that people regularly sold things from booths or barrows at festivals; no doubt it was from one of these that Strepsiades bought Pheidippides' toy at Diasia. There is also a good deal of scattered evidence for performances and shows of one kind and another that were not organized as competitions, such as Plutarch's mimes at Diasia. Most of the bustling activity at festivals has however left almost no trace, though comedy is a good guide to imaginative reconstruction – Menandrean comedy, with its maidens impregnated and abandoned at festivals, as well as Aristophanic. It will have mattered to almost everyone that the traditional rites were properly performed, but how they were to be interpreted must have mattered much less than the range of stimulating activities they gave occasion to. Athenaeus' Boeotian "asserted that the ancestral customs must be observed and that there is no need to account for them to others" – and nor, it is surely implied, to ourselves.

Guide to Further Reading

The older standard account of Greek calendars and months, Samuel 1972, is still useful, but Trümpy 1997 is more up to date. Mikalson 1975 is good on the dates of Athenian festivals, though now dated. For Athenian festivals, the older standard works in German, Mommsen 1898 and Deubner 1932, contain comprehensive (but epigraphically outdated) collections of the evidence in Greek, but are antique in approach; so also Pfuhl 1900, on Athenian processions. In English, Parke 1977 is largely derivative, Simon 1983 useful on archaeological evidence but thin. Parker 2005, a superb study, is now the standard work on Athenian festivals. For particular Athenian festivals see the excellent Pickard-Cambridge 1968, which only deals with festivals of Dionysus; Brumfield 1981 on festivals of Demeter; and R. Hamilton 1992 on Anthesteria (more detailed than the treatment in Parker 2005, but less convincing). For non-Athenian festivals Nilsson 1906 is still the standard comprehensive treatment, but badly needs replacement. Those who do not read German can consult Farnell 1896–1909, which is not much older than Nilsson but rather less incisive. The discussions of various festivals in Harrison 1922 and 1927 are dated in approach and sometimes unreliable on detail, but much more stimulating than Farnell. There are useful summary accounts of various non-Athenian festivals (as well as of some Athenian) in Dillon 1997 and 2002. The studies of festivals in Burkert 1979, 1983, and 1985 (and in various articles) are learned, brilliant, and exciting, which is all the more reason to exercise the caution which my criticism in this chapter of some of his views is meant to recommend. N. Robertson's many studies of festivals (e.g. 1983, 1984, 1985, 1992, 1993, 1996) rarely command assent but are learned and often supply important correctives. Regional studies of Greek cult are now often the best starting-point for study of non-Athenian festivals: Willetts 1962 for Crete, Schachter 1981–94 for Boeotia, Graf 1985 for northern Ionia, Jost 1985 for Arcadia. Pettersson 1992 is less dated on the Spartan festivals of Apollo than Wide 1893, and useful for archaeological evidence. Schachter 2000 on the Theban Daphnephoria and Humphreys 2004:223–75 on Anthesteria are good studies of the development of festivals over time, a tricky subject because of the scantiness of our evidence from any one period.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Time and Greek Religion

James Davidson

Time is one of the most important elements in any religious system. Like the spatial dimension, with which it is integrally entwined, time functions both as something to be organized and as a given field of orientation, by turns informed by and informing the sacred. This means that ultimately there are few areas of Greek religion, its myths, divinities, rituals, cult, in which questions of time are not resonant. In this chapter, therefore, I will merely be looking at those areas of religion in which the temporal dimension is most obviously in play: the movements of stars and luminaries, calendars, New Year, the language of days and sequences, the age of Cronus, and the human life-cycle.

The Universal Calendar: Sun, Moon, and Stars

Time in Greece is not an abstract entity, but the cycles of stars and luminaries (Sun and Moon). Hence, when Plato in *Statesman* imagines a time when time went backwards he describes a change in the universe: "I mean the change in the rising and setting of the sun and the other heavenly bodies, how in those times they used to set where they now rise, and rise where they now set" (269a). Each polis had its own "lunar-solar" calendar organized around the annual Sun cycle of solstices and equinoxes and its twelve (and a third) moons. Helios (Sun) was an important figure in Corinth, and a reconstruction of Corinth's calendar from those of her colonies reveals a summer month called "Of the [festival of the?] Solstice," Haliotropios (*tropai* = "solstice"). Meanwhile at Olympia, "on the summit of 'Cronus' mountain,' the so-called 'Basilae' sacrifice to Cronus at the spring equinox" (Pausanias 6.20.1), and the quadrennial Olympic festival itself was scheduled to coincide, it has been calculated, with the second full moon after the summer solstice, a date which had to be known, and publicized well in advance. A quadrennial Olympics means a festival every fifty moons, which informs the myth of Endymion, the ancestral king of Elis,

who had a tomb at Olympia: "And they say the Moon fell in love with Endymion and bore him fifty daughters" (5.1.4).

Moons change noticeably over a few nights. In just a week "the circle of the full moon which divides the month in two" (Euripides, *Ion* 1155–6), will wane into a half-moon; a week later into a fine C-shaped closing moon, before virtually vanishing only to reappear a few nights later as a new moon,)-shaped, now waxing each night for two weeks, until it becomes full once more. Judging from the Athenian example, Greek religious festivals were almost always celebrated on the same day of the same moon each year. A festival around the 15th, sometimes called the "split-month" (*dichomēnia*), ought therefore to be a full-moon festival. The regular alternation of full thirty-day months with "hollow" months, which skipped "day 29," kept the calendar attuned to the lunar cycle. An extra "intercalary" month was regularly inserted to keep the lunar cycle roughly aligned to the solar year, to stop the high summer Panathenaea turning into a spring and then a winter festival. In Athens this extra month was normally added in midwinter (a second month of Posideon), in accordance with Delphi's practice, but we know of extra months inserted at other times of year.

The detailed workings of Greek calendars are highly controversial, but it is clear that these seemingly haphazard adjustments nevertheless produced great overall stability. Greek months and festivals seem to have stayed more or less where they were supposed to be within the solar year in harmony with natural cycles, and, although Greek cities did not generally coordinate their intercalations, over time they seem to have kept roughly in phase, so that one can "translate" Attic Hecatombaeon into Ephesus' Clareon, Priene's Panemos, etc. and *normally* those translations would be accurate. Indeed the first month-name in Greek literature, Lenaeon (Hesiod, *Works* 504) seems to be a translation of a Boeotian month-name into the "Ionian" calendar, more appropriate to Hesiod's panhellenic dialect. That so many fiercely independent poleis, acknowledging no overarching religious authority, managed, nevertheless, quietly to keep their "moons" and festivals more or less in step with each other over long periods is in itself quite remarkable, and it gives us a tangible illustration of how there is an "ancient Greek religion" to speak of, without there being a unitary "ancient Greece."

Helios and Eos (Dawn) seem to be, along with Zeus, the only Greek deities with "impeccable Indo-European lineage both in etymology and in their status as gods" (Burkert 1985:17); yet classical Greeks could consider the worship of Sun and Moon a distinctly barbarian practice (Aristophanes, *Peace* 406–13). Certainly, Helios' descendants – Medea, Circe, Pasiphaë – are a decidedly outlandish bunch, and cults of luminaries were somewhat anomalous, though not necessarily (in the case of Helios) rare. Although important divinities were *associated* with luminaries from an early date, for example Apollo with the sun, they were never identified with luminaries; that had come to seem alien. Helios, Eos, and Selene were not just sidelined; persisting on the sidelines seems to have been their main function, namely to be "minor" deities that other more important deities were not the same as; thus they too helped to keep Greek religion "Greek."

The relentless cosmic timekeeping of stars and luminaries is one of the pillars of Greek religion, a bio-clock for mortals to be subjected to and for gods to rise above. The gods avoided disrupting that clock, save under exceptional circumstances,

though they might be tempted to push the envelope occasionally: Athena delays dawn and extends the night so that Odysseus might tarry a while with Penelope (*Odyssey* 23.241–6), and after the death of Patroclus Hera "sent" Helios into the ocean unwillingly, i.e. she hurried him up and shortened the day (*Iliad* 18.240). But when Helios discovers that Odysseus' companions have eaten his beef, and threatens of his own accord to shine in Hades, even Zeus must try to placate him (*Odyssey* 12.377–88).

Stars were also important. In the course of the night, the heavens seem to move, new stars rising in the east, while in the west others set. It looks like a giant hemisphere revolving, so that stars around the North Pole, for example the Great Bear, Callisto, never rise or set, but simply go round and round a central point. And each morning a star will rise a bit higher over the horizon, before dawn arrives, until eventually, after many months it reaches the other side and can be seen setting. The Greeks were especially interested in two dates in a star's annual cycle: the first time you saw a star set just before dawn, and its annual weeks-long holiday, its vanishing, followed by a sudden reappearance in the east just before dawn: its "heliacal" rising. These dates varied, of course, depending on the landscape and latitude: a Spartan in the deep valley of the Eurotas will have seen stars rising later and setting earlier.

Unlike moons, the "sidereal" star cycle stays 99.99 percent synchronized with the solar year. Hesiod in *Works and Days* uses the movements of stars to time the work of the agricultural year, and the late July reappearance of Sirius before dawn was long linked to the heat of the "dog days," a time of drought and pestilence. Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* (1–8) begins with Agamemnon's sighting of this star before dawn – "What is this star which makes its crossing?" – thereby dating the action of the play, the sacrifice of his daughter, and the ensuing (Etesian) wind, to a particular time of year, late July/early August. Plato's "Athenian" puts astronomy on the curriculum of his ideal city to ensure "the proper ordering of days into monthly periods, and of months into a year, so that times [*hōrai*], sacrifices, and feasts may each be assigned their due position, according to nature [*kata phusin*]" (*Laws* 809d). As in other aspects of their culture, the rowdy throng of Greek communities kept in time with each other by tracking universal supra-cultural facts.

Most extant star myths ("asterisms") are first attested in a later(?) epitome of Eratosthenes' *Katasterismoi* (third century BC) which has led to a popular but implausible assumption that Greek religion ignored constellations until the early hellenistic period; in fact, the author often cites earlier authorities (e.g. Euripides) and the first attempt to collect asterisms, the lost Hesiodic *Astronomia,* may have been composed as early as ca. 600 BC. At any rate, the Greeks identified stars with (mortal or formerly mortal) heroes and heroines from an early date, as if stars, unlike divinities, were subject to the passage of time, even sojourning in the nether regions of the underworld, i.e. partaking of death. Odysseus actually sees Orion on his visit to the underworld (*Odyssey* 11.571–4) and in winter months the very bright constellation called Tortoise or Lyre sets and rises again in one night; hence it came to be linked with (or informed) Orpheus' journey into and return from the underworld, and with Hermes, son of the Pleiad Maia, who guides the souls of the dead.

The popularity of night festivals (*pannychides*) and the practice of sacrificing to heroes at night will have given plenty of opportunity for the links between heroes and

stars to resonate during festivals. Moreover, the Greeks often located entrances to the underworld at seaside lakes or lagoons, such as Lerna or the Acherusian lake at the northwestern end of the Corinthian Gulf, the dead coming up to the still surface which reflected the night sky. These giant mirrors at the entrances to the underworld will have served further to blur the boundaries between the night sky and Hades. Polygnotus' painting of Odysseus' visit to the underworld, sometimes located at the Acherusian lake, showed at least one constellation, Callisto, the Great Bear, which never sets (Pausanias 10.31.10). For catasterism, translation to the stars, is not the same as apotheosis. In fact the heavens represented a kind of halfway zone in the cosmos between Hades and the realm of the Olympians, a zone perfectly suited to the halfway status of heroes.

Some of these catasterized heroes featured in important festivals, but the point is not that the manifestation of stars during a particular festival explains away certain myths and rituals, but rather that it represents a spectacular circumstance on the occasion of certain rituals and festivals, an integral and dynamic part of the sacred landscape, its sparkling vault: the stars marking the festivals, the festivals flagging up the stars.

There is evidence for some "immovable feasts," rituals closely tied to the reappearance of stars or their vanishing rather than to days of the moon. The Keans, we are told, awaited the arrival of the dreaded Dog each year on a mountaintop under arms like the Achaeans awaiting a wind at Aulis, so that sacrifice could be made to conjure the assuaging "Etesian" winds. The Dog appears on Keos's fourth-century coinages, rays emanating from its head. The ritual was said to have been inaugurated by Aristaeus, father of dog-plagued Actaeon, thus confirming other hints that he too was identified with Orion: "The man who saw his son killed by dogs put a stop to that star which of the stars in heaven has the same title" (Diodorus 4.82.3). In the agora of Phlius in the Peloponnese, meanwhile, Pausanias noted a bronze she-goat partly covered in gold: "the star they call the Goat (*Aix*) on its rising [mid-May onwards], ravages the vines without pause. In order that nothing disagreeable comes of it, the Phliasians honor the bronze goat in the agora, especially by adorning the image with gold" (2.13.6).

Other rituals associated with asterisms are undated, but we can make an informed guess at what the relevant stars were up to during the festival. In Euripides' *Erechtheus* (fr. 370 *TrGF*), Athena expounds upon the catasterism of Erechtheus' sacrificed virgin daughters as the Hyades (the muzzle of Taurus): "I lodged their spirit in the ether; and I will establish a famous name for mortals to call them by throughout Greece: 'Goddesses Hyacinthides' . . . I tell my townspeople to honor them with sacrifices each year, never in the course of time forgetting, with slit-throated ox-killings [*sphagaisi bouktonois*], and decorative dances, sacred and maidenly . . . and to offer to them first the sacrifice before battle . . . And these girls must have an uninfringeable sanctuary and you must keep any enemy from sacrificing furtively there, a victory for them, but for this land, affliction. . . . " In the *Katasterismoi* their father, Erechtheus/Erichthonius was identified with Auriga, the Chariot-Driver, whose death is described in terms of being "hidden" in a cleft in the earth opened by Poseidon's trident (Euripides, *Ion* 281–2; *Erechtheus* fr. 370.60). Indeed from the end of August, Capella (Aix), the very bright star forming Auriga's shoulder, reached its apex directly above the Erechtheum and may have been visible

through the "skylight" in its north porch, or even reflected in the pool of "sea water" associated with the marks of Poseidon's trident: "That there was some connection between the markings in the rocky crypt below and the bright heavens above seems inescapable" (Hurwit 1999:204; Parker 2005:254–5; Pausanias 1.26.5). Auriga also sets together with his daughters the Hyades in November, these "deaths" finally resolving the struggle between Athena and Poseidon for Attica, which formed the subject of the western pediment of the Parthenon, the side from which one would view "Erichthonius" and his daughters going down together. Another episode, the "vanishing" of Auriga with Hyades/Taurus in late spring, a time of year closely linked to Artemis, seems to inform the myth of Hippolytus, whom the Troezenians identified with Auriga (Pausanias 2.32), killed when "a bull from the sea" got too close to his horses, who then vanished: "hidden away along with the dreadful monstrous bull, in the rocky ground, I don't know where" (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1247–8).

Hyacinthus was himself depicted as an asterism (being "led up to heaven") on his tomb beneath the late archaic Amyclae Throne (Pausanias 3.19.4), a scene that would probably be read as an image of starry "Hyacinthus" rising into heaven during his festival in Hecatombeus (= Hecatombaeon). There was certainly opportunity for stargazing during the Hyacinthia, for Euripides talks of Helen "rejoining the revels of Hyacinthus for a night of gladness, he whom Apollo killed with the round discus having contested for the furthest throw, the day of ox-sacrifice in the Laconian land" (*Helen* 1465–74). A nocturnal epiphany would explain the celebrations, which otherwise seem a bit callous.

The handbooks mention yet another identification with Auriga, Myrtilus the Chariot-Driver, son of Hermes, son of the Pleiad Maia. It seems that the chariot he was driving at the time of his death (catasterization) was that of Pelops, during a country ride at Geraestus, at the southernmost tip of Euboea or even crossing the Aegean: "Myrtilus, sunk in the deep sea, tossed headlong out of the all-golden chariot in grievous outrage . . . " (Sophocles, *Electra* 508–12; cf. Euripides, *Orestes* 988–96). His body was washed ashore and taken inland to Pheneus in Arcadia where Myrtilus received annual nocturnal offerings at his tomb by the temple of Hermes (Pausanias 8.14.10). Many years later Pelops' shoulder was fished from the Euboean coast and taken to Olympia (5.13.5).

The chariot itself was a gift to Pelops from Poseidon, "a golden chariot, and horses with untiring wings" (Pindar, *Olympians* 1.87), "so that even when it ran through the sea its axles were not wet" (Apollodorus, *Epitome* 2.3). A golden chariot which comes from the sea and flies sounds already very much like an asterism. The east pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia showed not only the chariot and Myrtilus/Auriga, but Myrtilus' great aunt, the Pleiad "star-eye" Sterope, wife of Oenomaus. During the Olympic festival Auriga will have risen majestically over the nocturnal celebrations in honor of Pelops. But another figure on the pediment, a mysterious crouching boy, seems, from parallels on coins, to have been Arcas, also called "Nocturnal" Nyktimos, the constellation Boötes, founding hero of the Arcadians, legendary enemies of the Eleans. Boötes would have been seen setting during the festival, preferably right over the mound "in the west" where Pausanias was told Arcadians were buried; they had fled in panic in that direction, away from their homeland, when a heroic baby, Sosipolis, turned into a snake (6.20.6).

New Year

The "new year," which might be defined as the occasion on which annual magistrates or sacred officials took up office, and/or when new citizens were admitted into the citizen body, varied greatly throughout Greece, even between colonies and mother-city. Some cities, such as Thebes, anticipated the modern pattern of a midwinter new year; other calendars began around the spring or autumn equinoxes, Athens, "around the summer solstice" (Aristotle, *History of Animals* 543b), in accordance with Delphi, or, if we follow Plato's "Athenian," "with the month next after the summer solstice" (*Laws* 767c, cf. 945e).

The changeover from old year to new was not just a single day but the climax of a much longer period, often marked by rituals of cleansing and renewal, veiling and unveiling, passing on secrets, absence and return, by festivals of disorder or of suspension of norms, and of rebirth, festivals which often looked back to the foundation of the city and/or to the start of a new divine order. At Thebes for instance "the Polemarchs [war magistrates] always celebrate a festival of Aphrodite upon the expiration of their term of office" (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4.4); the three magistrates were joined by three courtesans (*hetairai*), it seems. The strange ritual could not but recall the adultery of the war god Ares and Aphrodite, which resulted in the birth of Harmonia (i.e. of civic harmony and continuity), who in Theban foundation myths was wife of the founder of the city, Cadmus. Meanwhile, at a secret location, the Theban Hipparch ("cavalry commander") was initiating his successor into a secret sacrifice for Dirce, murdered by the founders Amphion and Zethos, just as he himself had been initiated by his predecessor (Plutarch, *Moralia* 578b).

Magistrates in classical Athens took up office in Hecatombaeon, the month which climaxed with the Panathenaea. The centerpiece of this festival was the presentation on the 28th of a new dress, a *peplos,* to the city goddess, i.e. the wooden statue of Athena Polias, kept in the "Erechtheum," a statue believed to have fallen from heaven. But this presentation was simply the crescendo of a series of transitional rites which had begun nearly two months earlier with the stripping of the goddess at the Plynteria (Burkert 1985:228–33): "The family of the Praxiergidae perform these rites in secrecy on the twenty-fifth day of Thargelion [month 11], removing the goddess's adornments [*kosmos*] and veiling the seated idol [*hedos*]. Because of this, Athenians regard this day as the unluckiest of all days, one on which no business should be conducted" (Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 34.1).

Next, in Skirophorion, the last month of the year, the two little girls called Arrhēphoroi performed their last service for the goddess: "They place on their heads what the priestess of Athena gives them to carry; she does not know what it is she gives them, nor are they any the wiser. In the city, not far from Aphrodite 'in the Gardens,' is an enclosure, and running through it, a natural underground passage. Here the maidens descend. They leave the things they are carrying down there, and pick up some other thing, which they fetch back wrapped up. Thereupon they are immediately discharged, and [the Athenians] take other girls up to the acropolis in their place" (Pausanias 1.27.3).

The month and the year closed with a sacrifice to Zeus (Lysias 26.6). In Hecatombaeon itself, before the Panathenaea, more foundational/transitional

festivals were celebrated. On the 12th there was a feast of Cronus (Demosthenes 24.26), a "harvest home" festival in which slaves and masters celebrated the end of the work of harvesting together. Four days later on the 16th was the Synoikia commemorating Theseus' unification (*synoikismos*) of Attica. An important but undated procession (*pompē*) for Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho (Persuasiveness) was also associated with this event. A hellenistic inscription dated to the last day of the year entrusts to the city magistrates (Astynomoi) of the following year the preparatory task of cleaning Aphrodite's temple, its altars and images, and the provision of purple, all "according to ancestral customs" (*kata ta patria*; Parker 2005:461).

New year was the occasion on which the "tyrant-slayers" put their revolutionary plan into action in Athens, while the Theban coup-plotters chose the new year celebrations of the Aphrodisia for theirs. Whether these coincidences of historical-political and sacred-political turning-points are created by revolutionaries skilled in the art of resonant news-making, or by later narrators skilled in the art of resonant legend-making, is a question that perhaps needs more serious investigation, but it underlines the fact that a calendar is a "live" web of significances, not merely a useful index of events.

More insistent than the yearly rhythm was the monthly rhythm. The Greeks divided each moon into three decades, ten of waxing, a middle ten around the full moon, and ten of waning, which, in Athens, were counted backwards from 9. This structure emphasizes the sense of each month reaching a climax, with the numbers diminishing as the moon diminishes. Monthly festivals created or reflected ritual and mythical connections. Artemis's day – Day 6 – is next to the day of her twin brother Apollo – Day 7. Aphrodite and Hermes are celebrated together on Day 4, which informs and is informed by myths and cults which linked them as a symbol of a happy couple, reflected in their combination son, Hermaphroditos, who was also honored on this day by superstitious types (Theophrastus, *Characters* 16.10–11). But gods were not merely associated with a particular phase of each moon, but more abstractly with the *number* of their day. Apollo's identity as "seventh-born" is linked to other sevens in the god's *imaginaire*. We hear of a group of Athenians called "Fourth-ists," Tetradistai, who celebrated Aphrodite Pandemos (Menander, *Kolax*, at Athenaeus 659d). Hermes was sometimes represented in the form of the "tetragonal works" we call "Herms" (Thucydides 6.27), as were other "Fourth-borns," Aphrodite, Hermaphroditos, and Heracles, the shape itself, as it were, encoding a date. Again we must be careful not to mistake symbolic for historical dates. The victory at Marathon was commemorated on Boedromion 6, even though the battle was fought around the time of the full moon (Herodotus 6.120), probably because the festival included a votive sacrifice for Artemis and the 6th was her day.

Sequences and Processes

Another important aspect of time in Greek religion is simple sequence. The fact that Artemis' day precedes Apollo's informs and is informed by the pervasive tradition that she was the first of the twins to be born. Fourth-born Eros is born fourth in sequence in Hesiod's *Theogony* (120). Zeus Sōtēr is honored on the last day of the year and in the last of three toasts/libations which began the symposium. The heroes are

honored in the second libation and on the second day of each month. Sequential values can be ascribed according to some basic principles, which might of course contradict each other: that the gods or the divine precedes the mortal, that the undifferentiated precedes the differentiated, that the simple (e.g. roasting, four-stringed lyre) precedes the elaborate (e.g. boiling, seven-stringed lyre), that what's underneath precedes what is on top of it, that an initial act precedes the re-enactment. A special set of sequences involves natural process, morning to night, birth to death, fresh to rotten meat.

Moreover, it is characteristic of the Greeks to construct the "world as it is" as a "world as it has become," and almost any feature of that *achieved* world, its things (fire, honey, the lyre, stars), its practices and institutions (agriculture, charioteering, sacrifice, marriage, theft), its inhabitants (women) could be unthought, especially through narratives of origin, which often focus on the first discovering (*heurein*), or the first divine gift or epiphany, thus projecting sequence onto the mythistorical level by postulating a prior epoch devoid of this thing. This kind of unthinking of the status quo could be quite radical. At various times myth (and ritual) imagines a time without labor, homosexual *erōs*, the division between free and unfree or between mortals and immortals, and even, in the context of the divine dispute over Attica, without the disfranchisement of women: "to appease Poseidon's anger, the women . . . should no longer have a vote" (Varro at Augustine *City of God* 18.9). An especially resonant category of discoveries involves the discovery of manufacturing processes: the process of turning grapes into wine, wheat into bread, wool into cloth. These items contain two lots of time, the processing of the item from raw material to finished product recapitulating the discovery of the process in mythistorical time.

It was always possible, therefore, for ancient commentators to make, and for modern scholars to infer, a connection between a particular ritual or cult practice and a particular superseded epoch. The wedding ritual in which a boy with a crown of oak leaves offered bread from a winnowing-fan, saying "I/They fled the bad; I/they discovered the better," a formula also intoned in Bacchic initiations (Demosthenes 18.259), was interpreted as marking the "change in life" from the *agrios* ("wild") and *akanthōdēs* ("thorny") to the *alēlesmenos* ("ground") *bios* (Oakley and Sinos 1993:29). Using this parallel we might also agree with Brelich (1969:143), that the ban on bread on Day 1 of the Spartan Hyacinthia ceremonially evoked a primordial time when bread had not yet been invented.

There are numerous examples of these localized alignments of before–after, early–late sequences. The *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* paints an incongruous image of the new god Hermes doing all his "firsts" – inventing the lyre, fire, herding, thieving, sacrifice – on his very first day as a newborn baby. The "fled the bad, found the better" formula assimilates the processing of initiates (into marriage or mysteries) to the processing of grain from winnowing-fan to bread and further with the historical progress of mankind from "thorny" to "ground way of life." First thing at dawn, and first in sequence, the Hellanodikai solemnly inspected the athletes for the *stadion* sprint, the first event, supposedly, at the dawn of the Olympic Games. The Anthesteria commemorated Dionysus' gift of wine, the time when wine was new, by interrupting the fermentation process, and by ritual drinking of must, or "new wine," at a shrine said, by Thucydides (2.15.4), to be the earliest of his shrines in Athens. Just as we have come to understand that myths about Dionysus' "coming" do not (necessarily)

reflect the god's historical arrival, but rather project onto the historical level an essential quality of his divine personality as "the coming god," so earliness and lateness, priority and posteriority, should also be seen as symbolic sequential values with their own rhyme and reason which need not have anything to do with a real historical progression (Sourvinou-Inwood 1987:216). Hyacinthus might seem to precede Apollo at Amyclae, not necessarily because of some memory of the fact that his cult is more ancient at the site, as, indeed, it may well have been, but because Apollo's throne sits on top of Hyacinthus, literally *superseding* him. Accordingly, in the three-day Hyacinthia, Hyacinthus' day precedes Apollo's, and his cult is marked by another symbol of earliness, namely a ban on invented/end-product bread.

Perhaps the most elaborate use of manufacturing processes as models for time, from start/invention to finish, is to be found at the Panathenaea, in which two end-products featured prominently, a finished *peplos* presented to the goddess and olive oil used as prizes for the Games, just as the olive's leaves were used for victory crowns ([Aristotle], *Athēnaiōn Politeia* 60). Both were "gifts of Athena," which had been manufactured according to strict ritual protocols in the preceding year. The warp for the weaving was set up almost exactly nine months before the Panathenaea at the Chalkeia on the last day of Pyanopsion, a festival which celebrated "the discovery of techniques." The finished cloth features prominently on the Parthenon, on the centerpiece of the lintel which stood over the entrance, probably indicating an originary *peplos*, woven by Pandrosus, daughter of Cecrops, "first to prepare woolen clothing for mortals." The oil was produced from branches of "sacred olives" from all over Attica, descended from the very first tree believed still to be growing by the shrine of Pandrosus within the "Erechtheum," a gift celebrated on the back of the Parthenon. Moreover, an olive branch was fixed to the front of a house in which a new Athenian male had been born, raw wool if it was a girl; and indeed the first Athenian, Erichthonius, founder of the Panathenaea, had been born from a piece of raw wool impregnated with craftsman Hephaestus' sperm and dropped onto the earth. Therefore, through ritual practices, myths, and images, the processing of olive into oil and wool into cloth provided a model sequence for the foundation of Athens as Athena's city, for the first Athenian and for each Athenian.

Of course festivals could play games with sequence. In Athens, the three-day Thesmophoria on 11–13 Pyanopsion, was linked to the story of Persephone's rape and return and Demeter's teaching of the secret of wheat, this *triduum* recapitulating the tripartite division of the year into three seasons, the middle day of fasting, Nesteia, linked to Persephone's *saison en infer* and Demeter's mourning. But the rotten pigs linked to the pigs of Eubouleus swallowed up by the earth along with Persephone, were first retrieved from the underworld "halls" (*megara*), it seems, before fresh pigs were deposited to be retrieved next year, and the first day was called Anodos, which refers to the wives' "going up" to the temporary encampment for the duration of the festival, but also, inevitably, to Persephone's "going up" from Hades, and the last day Kalligeneia "Beautiful Birth" seems to invoke the birth of Persephone, the festival thus reversing the sequence of the myth: return, loss, birth. Likewise the Anthesteria, 11–13 Anthesterion, seems to have begun by commemorating the discovery of safe drinking with unusually sober toasts of wine mixed with water on Day 1, followed by Choes, a day of dangerous drinking – "I have poured in unmixed wine again and drained it without taking a breath" (Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 1229) – anti-socially,

without speaking, and straight from the jug (*chous*), as if in the course of the festival, the Athenians "unlearned" how to drink well.

The Reign of Cronus

The most important general beliefs about a prior epoch, of a "more ancient" *bios* ("way of life"), *genos* ("generation" or "race"), or *basileia* ("reign"), in which the world was substantially different, revolved around intersecting myths concerning: (1) the succession of Zeus to Cronus; (2) the estrangement of gods from men; and (3) the origins of the human life-cycle of aging, reproduction, and death.

Zeus is often called "son of Cronus" and poets told of how there had once been a "reign of Cronus" until Cronus was overthrown by his son and banished to remote isles where he still ruled over the Blessed (Graziosi and Haubold 2005:57; Versnel 1987). The story presupposes the possibility of Zeus himself being overthrown in turn. At the start of his reign, forewarned that Metis will bear him a son who will supplant him, he swallows her, and hence himself gives birth to Athena through a crack in his skull. Much later, forewarned that his hypothetical son by Thetis will overthrow him, he arranges for her to be raped and married to a mortal, resulting in the mortal hero Achilles. These myths, very popular in both images and literature, construct the current age, the age of Zeus, as one suspended between a past and future succession, a reign the end of which has on at least two famous occasions been narrowly avoided. This notion of the contingency of the gods, their constant need to be on guard against supersession, is also reflected in the fact that their immortalness itself needs constantly to be maintained with nectar and ambrosia.

Several famous myths told of the alienation of gods from men. Tantalus had been close to the gods, sharing their feasts until he tried to feed them his son Pelops; alternatively, according to Pindar's self-conscious rewriting of the myth, Pelops had actually lived on Olympus, serving them ambrosia and nectar, before being ejected when it appeared that some of the precious substances had been passed on to mortals, so, like Thetis's hypothetical son, Pelops was cast down, an ex-immortal, from a world of deathlessness to one of aging, reproduction, and death (*Olympians* 1.35–66). Similarly, it was at a communal banquet of gods and mortals that Prometheus first tried to trick Zeus with fat-covered bones, alienating the gods and provoking Zeus to refuse men the gift of fire. Hesiod's sequel to this episode tells how Prometheus stole fire and gave it to men, and so Zeus made woman, Pandora, a "misfortune" as penalty "for the fire" (*anti puros*; *Works* 57), a drain on his resources, forcing him to work and aging him. She it was who unleashed misfortunes (*kaka*), hard work (*ponos*), and sicknesses into the world when she opened Pandora's "Box." The myth emphasizes another feature of the anterior epoch: the invention of woman means the invention of mortal sex.

These themes of a lost world of divine intimacy and lack of toil are brought together in Hesiod's classic account of the earlier "golden race" of men, "friendly with the immortal gods" (*Works* 120): "These lived in the time of Cronus, when he was ruler in heaven, and they lived like gods, with no cares in their heart, without toils or sadness. Terrible old age did not affect them either, but never changing in arms and legs they enjoyed themselves in feasting, free of all evils. And when they died it

was as if they fell asleep. They had every good thing, and the fruitful earth of its own accord produced crops, full and in abundance'' (*Works* 111–18). Hesiod went on to describe four more generations of mortals during the reign of Zeus – silver, bronze, heroic, and iron, our own race, which will itself be destroyed when time presses so hard upon us that even newborn babies will have gray hair. For successiveness, timefulness, is itself a feature of the age of Zeus: Cronus' single age without age or succession(s), as unchanging as gold, is followed by an age of ages, of endless successions. It is aging, susceptibility to the ravages of time, that separates mortals from gods, rather than merely the ultimate finality of death. Nectar and ambrosia keep the gods not merely immune from extinction, but incorruptible and full of youthful vitality, *hēbē*.

It was at Olympia that the epochal myths were most resonant. The central enclosure or Altis was dominated by a hill which belonged to Cronus, who received sacrifices performed by the Basilae at the spring equinox. Pausanias (5.7.6–10) was told by the most learned Eleans that Cronus had actually had a temple in the sanctuary built for him by the golden race of men, and that the very first Olympic contest was a wrestling match between Zeus and his father for the throne of heaven, making Olympia the site at which the age of Zeus began. The topography could make it seem as if Zeus had kicked his father up the hill, so to speak, and the spring equinox is very early for a festival of Cronus, whose moons/festivals are normally closer to the summer solstice, making it look as if Olympian Zeus had supplanted his father in the calendar as well and pushed him back in time. The festival began, moreover, in Elis with mourning for Achilles, Zeus' deferred successor, the hero whose death guaranteed the continuation of the reign of Zeus. At the foot of Cronus' hill was the famous altar of Zeus, a giant mound of burnt offerings, cow-bones, and poplar ash. Every year it grew a little higher as more blood and thigh-bones were added to the pile. Moreover, once a year on a date carefully observed by the seers around the time of the festival of Cronus, the ashes from the eternal flame in the hearth of the Prytaneion were gathered and mixed with water from the Alpheius to form a muddy paste which was then applied to the great altar (Pausanias 5.13.11), this annual application ''making no small contribution to the size'' (5.15.9). With its remorseless cyclical accumulations, the altar was a kind of epochal clock, therefore, a vivid monument to the passing of time, the duration of the age of Zeus.

Pausanias noted also an altar to Themis (5.14.10), ''That which is established,'' who helped to preserve the established order by forewarning Zeus of the threat of supersession presented by Thetis' son (Pindar, *Isthmians* 8.31). In fact Hesiod says she was Zeus' second wife after Metis, and produced with him the Fates and Hōrai, the three Seasons or Times, named Justness (Dikē), Good Order (Eunomia), and Peace (Eirēnē) (*Theogony* 901–2), who received cult in many cities. They seem to represent not so much three individualized seasons presiding over three different times of year, but the principle of seasonableness itself, cyclical (con)sequence, going around and coming around: Timely Goddesses. The Times act as Keepers of Heaven's Gates (*Iliad* 5.749, 8.393), a nice illustration of the way that time itself separated mortals from immortals. This reflects a ''cyclonic'' model of time-space, with divine Olympus at its still center and mortals at its wasting rim, a construction allegorized in the different destinies of two Trojan princes, the eternally youthful Ganymede serving immortality to the immortals on Olympus behind the gates

guarded by the Times, and ever-aging Tithonus living with Dawn, the Edge of Days herself, on the oceanic circumference.

Human Time

Radical physiological change was a distinguishing characteristic of mortal man, as the Sphinx's riddle, which spoke of the ages of man as if they were three completely different species of animal with their own forms of locomotion, made clear. This characterization of mortals as quintessentially changeable over time meant that, like wool to cloth, olive to oil, vine to wine, the processing of man from birth to decrepitude via maturity, citizenship, and marriage could be used as a temporal model in a formal, structured way. Athens, Sparta, and Crete, and probably most poleis, were what anthropologists call "age-class societies," i.e. each year's batch of new citizens was enrolled *en masse* into an age-set (e.g. "ephebes of 380 BC") which then progressed through a number of age grades which carried with them certain (in)eligibilities and responsibilities. Age also qualified one for certain ritual roles: the Arrhēphoroi had to be between 7 and 11. The priest of Zeus at Achaean Aigion was the most beautiful boy of all his coevals. As soon as hair appeared on his face he was, apparently, discharged (Pausanias 7.24.2).

These grades were also associated with idealized images, recognizable above all by height and beard: the "boy," under-height, no beard; the "man," full height, bearded; and, halfway between them, the "ephebe," full-grown, no beard, probably representing the intermediate grade referred to in Athens as *Meirakion*, *Neaniskos*, or *Neanias*, "18" and "19," for puberty came late in antiquity. In this way the ephebic image of a full-bodied, beardless *kouros*, taking one step forwards, could represent New Citizenship and therefore the new year. The greatest number of such *kouroi* was discovered at the Boeotian Ptoion.

In Athens each new year-set was identified with one of forty-two eponymous year-heroes endlessly recycled, the one surrendered by the retiring set of those turning 60. These year-heroes remain mysterious, but we can safely assume that, like other heroes, they had tombs and cults, and that the forty-two-year cycle therefore had a cultic and topographical dimension. We can perhaps see reflections of these age-class cycles in the inauguration of the Parthenon in 438, precisely forty-two years after the Persian Sack (Philochorus, *FGrH* 328 fr. 121), i.e., the year in which the set of the hero initiated at the time of the Sack was socially reincarnated. The construction of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, ca. 456, at the time of the start of the eighth forty-year cycle since the foundation of the Games in 776, is also unlikely to be coincidental.

Age-graded choruses performed at numerous festivals, and different grades seem to have been associated with different times, maiden choruses, for instance, often performing at night. Collectively these divisions by age grade could produce a spectacular self-representation of the community in all its demographic splendor. At the Hyacinthia for instance: "Boys [*paides*] with tunics hitched up play the lyre and sing to the sound of oboes. They sing to the god [Apollo] in a high pitch . . . The entire cohort of *neaniskoi* enter and sing one of the local [Amyclaean] songs. . . ." The hard, mechanical structure of the age-class cycle meant that physiological change

could represent time itself. Hence when Plato imagines time in reverse he imagines not just stars and luminaries moving backwards but men growing smoother-cheeked and smaller day by day. In Sparta, Plutarch (*Lycurgus* 21.2; cf. Sosibius *FGrH* 595 fr. 5) mentions performances of three choruses "in the festivals" organized "according to the three age grades." The old men (*gerontes*) first sang "once we *were* bold *neaniai*," then the chorus of men at their peak (*akmazountes*) "We *are*; if you are willing, look," and finally *paides*, "And we *will be* mightier far." It seems quite likely that Plutarch is referring to the dances called Gymnopaidiai, and it is quite possible therefore that the middle chorus of *Neaniai* is directing the gaze of the spectators to their naked bodies in explicit contrast with the older and younger males, their past and future bodies, dancing and singing alongside. It is almost as if each body at any one time contains its past and future selves; hence it seems to have been not uncommon for a mature man to be represented as an ephebe in painting and sculpture.

There were age-grade heroes – the hero Neanias who was offered a full-grown victim at Thorikos, the hero or god Pais at the Theban Cabeirion – and of course age grades were important in images of gods: "They fashion Zeus as bearded, Apollo as eternal boy, Hermes just getting his beard" (Lucian, *On Sacrifices* 11). In Crete Zeus could be shown as ephebe, the "Greatest Kouros" of the Hymn from Palaikastro, and in Aigion he was worshiped as Zeus Pais. There are even some very rare and shocking images of what seems to be a bearded Apollo. Similarly Hera could sometimes be not matriarch but virginal girl, Parthenia. She was said to be restored to that status, symbolically sent back in time, through taking a bath once a year at the Argive spring Canathos (Pausanias 2.38). At Plataea she was worshiped as both "Bride to Be," Nympheuomenē, and Teleia, "Complete" (Pausanias 9.2,7). At the climax of Euripides' *Heraclidae* Iolaus, Heracles' doddery old charioteer, becomes a young man for a day, or at least he is given a "youthful" arm for holding the reins (857), thanks to the intervention of Heracles and Hebe, appearing as bright lights on the yoke of his chariot, sending youthfulness up the reins, as it were. Together with Hebe, Heracles, and Heracles' mother, Alcmene, Iolaus was one corner of the quartet of powers worshiped by the youths who attended the gymnasium of Cynosarges.

Conclusion

Time is a richly and variously elaborated field in Greek religion, and it may seem quixotic to attempt to summarize its peculiar characteristics. But if we compare it with the time of neighboring and successor religions we notice certain emphases and may begin to get some feeling for its distinctive shape. Most obviously there is no single great founder, a Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, Jesus, or Zoroaster marking a radical break with the past in historical time – though initiates into Mystery religions, which looked back to a first teacher of holy secrets, may have felt less different in this respect. And although a sense of the past and of origins is central and important in Greek religion, although there is even evidence for belief in a "fall" from that closer intimacy with the gods enjoyed by mortals in the Golden Age of Cronus, this "fall" is narrated differently by different poets and in different places. Importantly, there is almost no sense of a future reconciliation, let alone an Apocalypse, Last Days, Second Coming. The present is it.

More positively, Greek religion, its myths and practices, constructs a vivid sense of ongoing process and sequence. This movement is materialized in the passing of the sun from dawn to setting, of the moon from new moon to full moon to waning moon, of the stars from first rising to first setting to vanishing, in the passing of mortals from birth to the land of the shades, via blooming *hēbē*, marriage, and old age. And it is dramatized and allegorized in the processing of particular material products, wine, bread, cloth, from "raw" to consumable, in the processing of a sacrificial victim from slaughter to butchery to roasting to boiling to consumption. In many cases these processes are projected onto history, so that production recapitulates invention. This makes of the present a culmination or a confluence of a whole series of processes and discoveries, and of the past an unmade, incomplete present. This sense of time as accumulative might also be vividly represented in the literal piling up in temples and treasure houses of offerings made during previous festivals and recorded in temple accounts. Centuries later you could still see the dedications of Nicias at Delos, of the long-lost Sybarites at Olympia, of Croesus at Delphi, the chest of Cypselus, the three wooden images of Aphrodite carved from the prows of Cadmus' ships and dedicated by his wife Harmonia, the tomb of Pelops, the place where Poseidon's trident struck the rock of the Acropolis. The prime example of such accumulative deposits was the altar of Zeus at Olympia, the most material illustration of centuries of pious offerings, and of the continual burning of the sacred flame in the sacred hearth.

Timefulness, was a critical element in the Greek conception of what differentiated mortals from immortals and the basis of all intercourse between them. The gods were not merely deathless but ageless, beyond time, beyond change. And exchanges with the gods were specifically of the here and now, each gift looking both backwards and forwards, as thanks for past favors and in hope of future favors. For *charis* – "grace," "favor," "thanks" – which is the characteristic of all forms of cult, is a characteristic of necessarily *ongoing* relationships, gifts freely given which might oblige but never obligate the gods to return them, which they might return in a manner and at a time of their own choosing and often in quite surprising ways. Each gift, each favor was never paid back in full, but always left an imbalance, a further obligation, a further debt (Parker 1998).

This sense of *charis*, of freedom in exchanges, of mystery in the way gifts to the gods might be returned, of enigma in the way an oracle might be fulfilled, is one crucial factor in separating piety from the more mechanical exchanges and constraints associated with magic and witchcraft. Certainly these necessarily *ongoing* exchanges could never be finally tallied up at some future Day of Judgment, for the prospect of such a tally would undermine *charis*. At the same time, the Age of Zeus, unlike the Age of Allah or Yahweh, was constructed as contingent, an epoch which had been established at some point, before which there had been no Zeus, and the succession to Zeus was a possibility that had had to be deferred on at least two famous occasions in the past, when the threatened succession, of the offspring of Metis and Thetis respectively, was thwarted. The gods were not beyond time, but *situated* beyond time, not simply immortal and ageless but *maintained* as immortal and ageless through regular application of nectar and ambrosia, which was sometimes seen as embodied in the smoky essence of the parts of the victim which were burned for the gods on the altar. Sacrifice therefore not only marked distance, it helped to maintain

distance, to keep the gods gods, an exchange which did not just take place in an ongoing present, but helped to maintain that present, to sustain the ongoing Age of Zeus.

Alongside the sense of processing is the sense of continuity, of regular repetition. This is made vivid not only in the regular repetition of festivals – monthly, yearly, quadrennial, etc. – but also in institutions such as the forty-two Athenian year-heroes and the year sets with which they are identified, each new set of "18 year olds" representing the reincarnation, at the level of the social, of the retiring set of "60 year olds," creating a sense of "continual movement while standing still," a metastatic cycle. The wheel is not smooth however, but represents a series of climaxes, for each cycle, each moon, each man, reaches a peak, an *akmē*, followed by a waning or diminishing. The best way to reconcile these three characteristic features, these three types of time, accumulative, repetitive and climactic, is perhaps to think of layers of silt left by a recurring tide.

Guide to Further Reading

Students of Greek religion often neglect time per se, while students of Greek time have often focused narrowly on technical issues. Consequently, the *language* of time, i.e. the symbolic resonances of temporal structures, the movements of heavenly bodies, significance of dates, synchronicities, numbers, sequences, and age structures, has been neglected or even sidelined as representing an esoteric kind of thinking more at home in the East, and alien to the Greek mainstream before the hellenistic period. The following, however, may prove useful. The best introduction to the difficult literature on time in anthropology is Jedrej 1995. Stimulating meditations on aspects of Greek time in general are to be found in Van Groningen 1953, Brommer 1969, Trédé 1992, Golden and Toohey 1997, Csapo and Miller 1998 and Darbo-Peschanski 2000. Hannah 2005 is an accessible introduction to the sometimes fierce debates about how calendars worked. Mikalson 1975 collects all the information about religious activity on particular days of the year. Trümpy 1997 presents the most authoritative attempt to reconstruct Greek calendars, their relationships to one another and of month names to festivals. Parker 2005 presents the most up-to-date survey of Athenian festivals: chapter 13 on Thesmophoria, chapter 14 on Anthesteria, and appendix 1, the "Check List," have been especially useful. On Cronus see Versnel 1987. Condos 1997 is a useful translation with commentary of [Eratosthenes] *Katasterismoi* and Hyginus *De Astronomia* II. I have written at greater length on Athenian year-heroes and age structures in Davidson (2007).

PART V

Local Religious Systems

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"Famous Athens, Divine Polis": The Religious System at Athens

Susan Deacy

Among the most notable developments of research into Greek religion in recent decades has been the identification of the polis as the principal constituent of religious life. Of the numerous poleis, Athens continues to generate particular discussion, not least because we possess significantly more evidence than for any other city. Its festivals, beliefs, and sanctuaries are well attested, and we are informed about its religious ideas, and perhaps most striking of all its history. Where Athenian religion is concerned we have a unique opportunity to pinpoint when it was that changes were made to customs, and to identify the personalities who played a role in shaping local beliefs.

Studies of Athenian religion have followed a variety of routes. There have been investigations of festivals, of distinctive Athenian myths, and of the gods, heroes, and other religious beings of the local pantheon. Its history has been explored too, both in works that cover various periods and in studies that center on particular topics, such as the Acropolis rebuilding program or the sacrilegious events that shocked the city on the eve of the Sicilian Expedition. This chapter's aim is to explore the main features of the system while also showing how this system developed over time. This will enable me to address a duality in polis religion, namely that it placed emphasis upon tradition and repetition – on performing the correct rituals in the correct way at the appropriate time for instance – while being an open system that was continually evolving. It has become a near-cliché to write that, lacking a creed or anything approaching an organized church, Greek religion was open to constant reinterpretation; in the case of Athens, we are presented with an opportunity to explore in depth how a non-credal religion shaped the lives of its worshipers.

Athenian religion is such a vast topic that it would be impossible in just a few thousand words to cover every angle. What this chapter will do is to explore some of the most important features of the system: its distinctive pantheon, certain of its myths and rituals, and some of the events that affected the beliefs of the community.

Approaching the Gods: Religion in the "Monocentric" City

When the apostle Paul visited Athens in the first century AD, he encountered a city that was, from his Christian point of view, "overrun with idols" (Acts 17:16). The Athenians were known in antiquity for their exceptionally large pantheon. The reason for this was, in large part, the extraordinary size of the city in ancient Greek terms. Most poleis had an average territorial size of around 70 square miles. Corinth was large at about 250 square miles, yet the size of Athens was around 1,000 square miles. It was a huge city with a pantheon to match.

The main religious beings of this pantheon may be divided into several distinct though interrelating categories. The major Olympian gods played important roles, each in specific local manifestations. This section will survey a few prominent examples to provide a flavor of the nature of the system while introducing some of the figures we will explore in more detail below.

The chief deity was Athena, whose olive-wood statue on the Acropolis was the holiest object in Athens. It was thought that she had given her name to the city, and she was noted for her willingness to intercede on her people's behalf. The cult of Athena Polias ("of the city") was the major civic cult, although she was known by a range of other epithets including Promachos ("champion"), Nike ("victory"), Ergane ("worker"), Hygieia ("good health"), and Boulaia ("of the Council").

Another multifaceted goddess was Aphrodite, who was represented in her Olympian guise of goddess of love, but in a range of other ways too. As Pandemos ("of all the people") for example, her role was to unite groups of people, including prostitutes and their clients, husbands and wives, and even the whole city. Other prominent deities included Zeus, Poseidon, Hephaestus, Demeter, and Dionysus, but perhaps the most widely represented god was Hermes, whose distinctive statues, the herms, were situated outside temples and private houses. These were stone pillars consisting of a head of the god, and, at groin level, a phallus. They were such a familiar part of the city that Thucydides described them as a "national institution" (6.27.1).

Another class of religious beings was personified abstractions – figures like Themis ("Law"), Peitho ("Persuasion"), and Eirene ("Peace") – who have an intriguing status as, at once, personal gods and abstract qualities (cf. Chapter 4). Heroes and heroines were widely worshiped too, ranging from famous figures such as Heracles and Theseus to the less well known (to us), yet crucially important Erichthonius and Pandrosus, whom we shall investigate shortly.

To compound matters, the pantheon was far from a rigid system. We hear of the introduction of numerous "new gods," both from other parts of Greece, and from the non-Greek world. Some imported cults, such as that of the Egyptian Isis, remained privately organized, drawing their worshipers from the city's non-citizen population, whereas others were incorporated into state cult, as happened in the case of the Arcadian mountain god Pan in the early fifth century BC. Although more naturally associated with wild places than urban cult, he received a sanctuary beneath the Acropolis and a state-financed festival after appearing to the runner Pheidippides before the battle of Marathon.

Perhaps the most intriguing instance of an imported being is the eastern (possibly Cypriot) Adonis, a young lover of Aphrodite who had been gored to death by a bull when out hunting. First attested in Athens in the mid-fifth century, his cult became highly popular with women, who would gather noisily on the rooftops in midsummer to mourn his death. Here they would grow little "gardens of Adonis" in broken baskets consisting of fast-growing plants such as lettuce and fennel that would develop quickly only to wither and die in the heat. One thing that is curious about the festival is its location: on rooftops temporarily transformed into sacred space rather than at a designated sanctuary. Another strange feature concerns the participants. Although the cult remained outside the framework of state religion, it had wider appeal than other privately organized cults, with worshipers including citizen women as well as their non-citizen counterparts.

The presence of a large, varied, and ever-growing pantheon begs the question as to whether the Athenians were more religious than other Greeks. Certainly this was their reputation in antiquity, where they were distinguished for being, in the words of the second century AD visitor Pausanias, "far more zealous than other people in matters concerning the gods [*ta theia*]" (1.24.3). Alternatively, it may simply be the case that a city with a large territory and population was inevitably going to possess a greater number of cults. In the following paragraphs, we will investigate the nature of the Athenians' religiosity in order to test how far they were distinctive among the peoples of the Greek world.

We will begin with the aspect that gave the Athenians the greatest claim to a special relationship with the divine. Although, as we have seen, they stood out because of the number of gods they worshiped, they were also renowned for an exceptional bond with one deity in particular: Athena. In the first ever reference to Athena by an Athenian, for example, Athens is seen to be beset by civil strife but, nonetheless:

> Our city will never be destroyed by the decree of Zeus, nor by the wish of the blessed immortal gods, for such is she, our great-hearted goddess, mightily fathered, who protects us, Pallas Athena, who holds out her hands over us. (Solon fr. 4.1–4 West)

This special relationship makes our task of discussing the pantheon a little easier. Rather than attempting to cover the full range of gods and heroes in the space of a single chapter, our focus will be in large part Athena: her main place of worship (the Acropolis), her role in local myth, and the place of her cult in the city's ceremonial life. It should be emphasized that she is not being singled out as a case study; rather, she will be central to our discussion because she is central to the religious system in Athens.

Gods are human inventions. It is necessary to keep asking what desires or requirements led to the creation or development of their roles and functions. In the case of Athena in Athens we have an opportunity to trace developments in perceptions of the deity and in her significance for the community. Indeed, we are even able to trace her own role in the history of the city, for as we shall see, her worship evolved as her city grew in power and prestige.

It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to address the complex and controversial question of why Athena's cult came into existence in first place (whenever and wherever that was). Instead, our starting point will be an early development that provided the conditions to enable her to become the major deity of the whole state.

This was the synoecism, the process whereby the towns of Attica were made into a single political unit under the control of Athens. The ancient Athenians considered the process to be the achievement of Theseus, whose feat they celebrated each year at the Synoikia festival, but there has been extensive scholarly discussion concerning the period to which it is attributable, with possibilities ranging from the late Bronze Age to the early eighth century (see Parker 1996:12–17). In any case, by the time our sources begin Athens was a centrally administered "monocentric" city, the main urban sanctuary of which was the home of the principal cult of the whole polis, a situation neatly expressed by Pausanias: 'Both the city and the whole of the land are alike sacred to Athena, for even those who in their parishes ["demes"] have an established worship of other gods nevertheless hold Athena in honor' (1.26.6 (Loeb trans.)). This made Athens unusual in the Greek world. Most cities were "bipolar," with their major sanctuary located beyond the urban center. Argos' principal cult site for example, the Argive Heraion, was situated around 8 kilometers from the city, and the major sanctuary of Sparta, that of Apollo Hyakinthos, was at Amyklai about 5 kilometers away. But Athena's cult was situated at the heart of the city. Argive Hera and Spartan Apollo both protected their cities, but Athena's cult had a visibility and accessibility lacking in any other major polis cult.

The synoecism determined the significance and development not only of the cult of Athena, but of the religious system in general. This centralizing process is seen most strikingly in the case of the Great Mysteries celebrated at Eleusis in honor of Demeter and her daughter, Persephone or Kore. Originally an independent polis, Eleusis was incorporated into Attica in the late seventh or early sixth century BC. Thereafter, two Eleusinian families, the Eumolpidai and the Kerykes, who had been responsible for the administration of the cult, retained their priestly roles, but overall control passed to the King Archon, the official in charge of traditional cults. Moreover, from then on, the cult's *hiera* ("holy things") were housed in an urban headquarters, the Eleusinion on the slopes of the Acropolis, and were taken to Eleusis by procession at the time of the festival.

On one level, the Mysteries dwarfed in importance the cult of Athena Polias. Not only was it a panhellenic cult open to any speaker of Greek, but it appears to have addressed such universal concerns as the growth of the grain crop, and death and the afterlife: I say "appears" because so secret were the rites that our knowledge of them is frustratingly elusive (cf. Chapter 22). But far from ever challenging Athena's pre-eminence, the cult reinforced her place at the head of the pantheon. After the holy objects reached Eleusis, an official returned to Athens to report their safe arrival to the priestess of Athena. This bears out Pausanias' comment quoted above, that however much the demes had "an established worship of other gods," they also paid homage to the cult of the national deity.

Myth in the City: Gods, Heroes, and the "Children of Athena"

The close association between Athens and its patron is evident in three myths that taken together could be seen to constitute the principal "Athenian foundation myth." Not only do the stories establish Athena's relationship with the major gods

and heroes of the Acropolis, but they also explain how the citizen body came into being, and set up a relationship so intimate that Athena could even be considered the mother of their ancestral hero.

Athena's birth out of the head of Zeus was among the most widely represented of myths in Athens. It was a common scene on black-figure vases from around the middle of the sixth century for example, and the subject of the sculptures of the east pediment of the Parthenon. From this it may come as a surprise to learn that the myth is not set in Athens; indeed, Athena's birth does not even take place in Greece, but beside the river Triton in Libya (whence her epithet Tritogeneia). The situation may seem more surprising still when we take account of the fact that there were other local traditions of Athena's birth that represented her as indigenous. In Boeotia, for example, she was thought to have been born at the Alalkomeneion, one of her major sanctuaries in the region (see Deacy 1995:93–6), while Pausanias relates that, at Aliphera in Arcadia, there was an altar of Zeus Lecheatēs "In Childbed" (8.26.6). In short, Athens' patron god does not have the natural association with the land that being indigenous would supply.

Instead, Athena's close tie with Athens is established through another, and perhaps more effective, means. Rather than being born there, she chose to come to Athens to be its patron, even being willing to enter into a contest over it with a rival god, Poseidon (see, e.g., Apollodorus, *Library* 3.14.1). She won when the token she produced in support of her claim, the olive, was accepted over Poseidon's, a salt spring. This story is among the most striking myths of a deity's arrival. On the one hand, Athena chose Athens above all the cities of the Greek world, and her very first act was to produce the tree that was the staple crop of Attica. On the other hand, the Athenians chose her as well, with the result that her patronage was not only her choice, but something the Athenians likewise desired.

Athena's relationship with her people is expressed further in the myth about Erichthonius, one of the early Athenian kings, and the ancestor of the Athenian citizenry. I will mostly follow in summary the version of the myth narrated in one of our sources, Apollodorus, *Library* 3.14.6, because it is itself a convenient summary of various facets of the myth. According to this version, Athena went to Hephaestus because she needed weapons, but having been rejected by Aphrodite the god fell in love with her, and attempted to rape her. When he launched his attack, she ran away. Presumably we are meant to understand here that she did not yet have the weapons with which she could defend herself. In other words, this is Athena before she has come into possession of her characteristic warrior attributes: a more girlish figure, vulnerable to male sexual attention. Her vulnerability without weapons is emphasized in the next stage of the story in that, though Hephaestus was lame (*ēn gar chōlos*), he managed to catch up with her. A struggle ensued in which she managed to resist rape, but Hephaestus ejaculated over her leg. She wiped the semen to the ground "in disgust," but when the semen hit the ground, Ge (Mother Earth) became impregnated, and in time produced a child, Erichthonius, out of the ground.

We have here the Athenian version of a common pattern in local myth, namely for a foundation hero to be the autochthonous ("earth-born") son of Ge. Indeed, Erichthonius' name is an ideal name for such a hero, meaning as it does "very earthy." But the Athenians are doing something very clever with autochthony myth in that they are making him the offspring of gods as well: Hephaestus, but also in a sense Athena, who retains her virginity yet plays a crucial role in the production of the

child. The role elsewhere played by Ge alone is shared between two maternal figures, Ge and Athena.

This distribution of parental roles is demonstrated in Figure 14.1, an Attic stamnos from the second quarter of the fifth century BC. While Hephaestus looks on, Ge is emerging out of the ground handing the baby over to Athena. The child is reaching out to Athena, who is preparing to wrap him in her aegis. We are presented with a more feminine, nurturing Athena than the goddess as she normally appears in Attic (or any other) art. This is not the goddess in her guise of armed protectress, but a motherly figure, the nurturer of the ancestral hero.

According to the next stage in the myth, Athena wanted to make the child immortal so she shut him up in a chest and put a serpent or pair of serpents inside. These are ideal creatures in the circumstances because, like Erichthonius, they have associations that

Figure 14.1 The birth of Erichthonius. Attic stamnos, second quarter of the fifth century BC. Munich, Antikensammlungen 2413; redrawn by S.J. Deacy

are both chthonic (because they live in holes in the ground) and immortal (because they shed their skins). While the immortalization process was taking place, she entrusted the chest and its contents to three girls, the daughters of King Kekrops, instructing them not to look inside. But as is the way when Greek mythological characters are instructed not to look inside a container, they disobey. One of the daughters, Pandrosus, remained obedient, but the others, Herse and Aglauros, opened the chest. What they saw terrified them and they leapt to their deaths off the Acropolis. Athena's plan to make the child immortal was now thwarted. Quite why this is the case is unclear except that deification seems to have required conditions of secrecy. Certainly when Demeter was trying to make the Eleusinian child Demophoön immortal in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, she did so at night, and it was when another person (his mother Metaneira) intruded that the magic stopped working.

The Athenian foundation myth, then, hinges on failure. Although he was supposed to become immortal, Erichthonius had to remain human instead. But it is not all about failure. As a hero, Erichthonius still had an intimate relationship with Athena; indeed, he had a closeness to the goddess that exceeded that possessed by another hero of Greek myth, even Athena's special protégé, Heracles (see Deacy 2005). When the immortalization plan failed, Athena took Erichthonius into her temple on the Acropolis and reared him there. The maternal tendencies evident in earlier stages of the myth are taken further here in that she actually brought up the child.

As the "son" of Athena, Erichthonius is the foundation hero par excellence. On attaining adulthood, he performed two acts that enhanced Athena's cult: the erection of the statue of Athena Polias, and the foundation of the Panathenaea. The story about Erichthonius is also the story of Athena, who is now established even more firmly as the major deity of the Athenian state. It is also the story of the origins of the Athenian citizenry, who as the descendants of Erichthonius are in a sense the descendants of Athena. In mythic terms, the Athenians are not just the people of Athena, but her "children."

The myths take on an even deeper level of significance when we consider their connection with the cults of the Acropolis. The two major deities worshiped on the summit were Athena and Poseidon, the gods who fought to be Athens' patron, and the tokens that they produced were visible on the rock. As for the myth of Erichthonius, the altar of Hephaestus was located on the north side of the rock, together with the statue of Athena. The precinct of the "good" daughter Pandrosus was also situated here. (As befits the girl who leapt to her death off the rock, Aglauros' sanctuary, in contrast, was situated on the slopes.)

In the final decades of the fifth century, these and other cults were incorporated into the temple known to us (though not to the ancients) as the Erechtheum (see Figure 14.2). Its main function was to house the cult of Athena Polias, hence its ancient name, "the temple on the Acropolis in which the ancient image is," although it also housed the cults of Poseidon, Hephaestus, Pandrosus, Kekrops, Boutes, and Zeus in his guises of Hypatos ("most high") and Herkeios ("of the fence"), that is Zeus in dual guises as chief Olympian and as protector of the temple. The crevice of the guardian snake of the Acropolis was found here too, as were Poseidon's salt spring and Athena's olive tree.

A Greek temple is normally the home of the cult of a single deity. Why, then, was this curious multi-function building constructed? To address this question we need to consider the context in which it was built. It was part of the great Acropolis

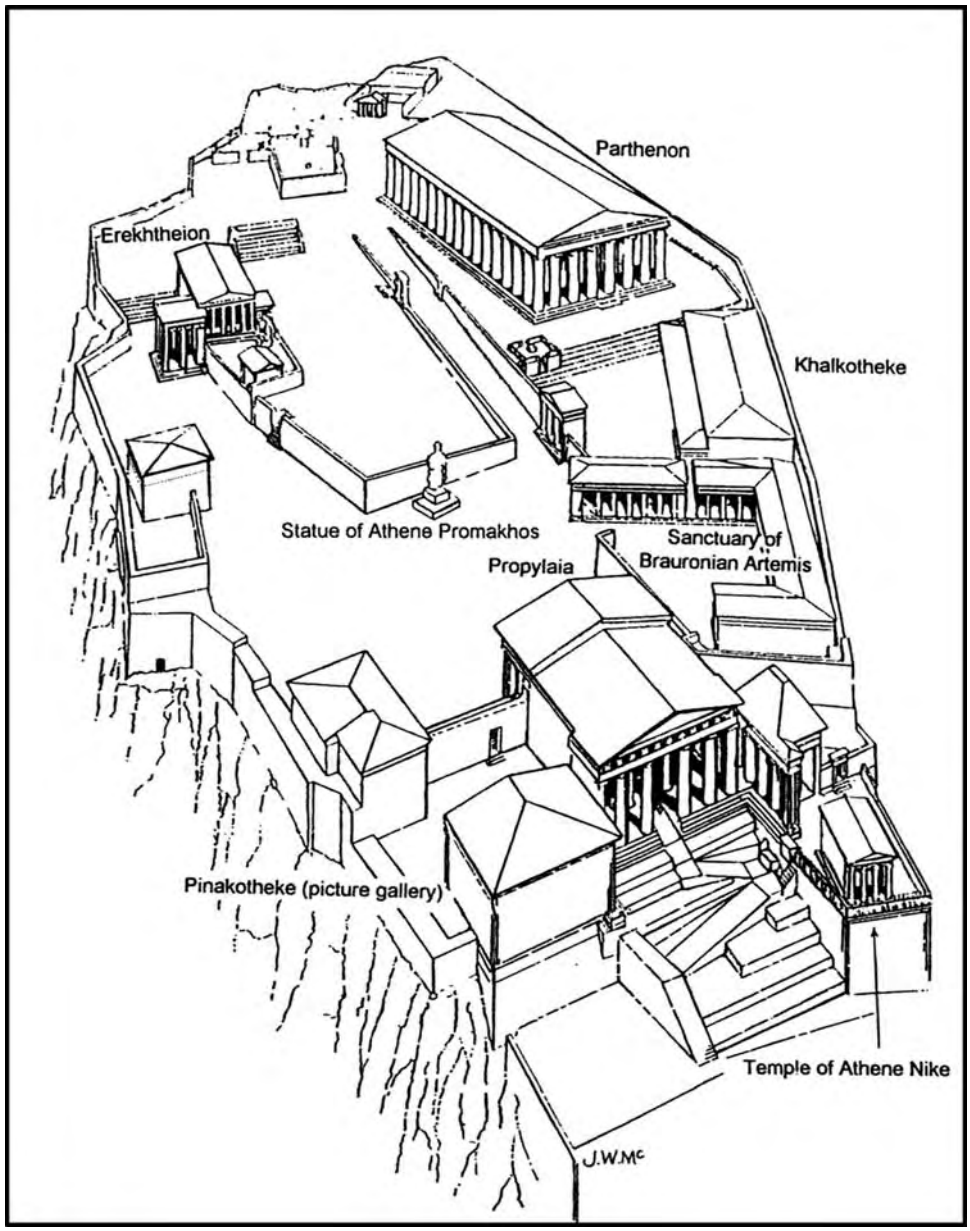

Figure 14.2 Plan of the Periclean Acropolis. Drawn by Jim McCartney; reproduced from Todd 1996:21, with permission. © Stephen Todd

rebuilding program of the second half of the fifth century, which took place under the leadership of Pericles. This at once beautified the city and gave renewed importance and visibility to the cult of Athena. Above all, the splendid Parthenon on the south side of the summit came to dominate the rock, while the sanctuary of Athena Nike just outside the Acropolis walls gained a richly decorated little temple.

With the construction of the Erechtheum, the numerous cult objects that once cluttered the north side of the rock were collected together in one place. They were at once duly honored, and hidden from view. In short, the Erechtheum does in a cultic way what the stories we have looked at do from a mythic perspective. They draw together a range of religious beings with a particular figure linking them: Athena. This enables us to restate one of the central points made above, that Athenian religion was at once highly diverse and uniquely focused. It also lets us underline another point, namely that the Athenians' relationship with their gods was always evolving. As Athens was becoming a great power in the fifth century, so Athena's cult was enhanced. We will consider this evolution further in the next section via an examination of the Panathenaea, Athena's major festival and the greatest celebration in the religious calendar.

Ritual in the City

The Athenians had a rich ritual life, with over sixty days given over to annual festivals alone (cf. Chapter 12). Rituals provided the most important means in ancient religion of establishing and maintaining a channel of communication with the gods. They also helped keep society healthy by enabling particular groups to gather together, often in ways precluded in ordinary life. At the Kronia, for example, masters and slaves feasted together. We even hear that masters took over the role of servants for the duration of the meal. Women had rich religious lives, including several festivals that provided an opportunity for them to gather together away from their menfolk. At the Adonia, as we have seen, women gathered on the rooftops to mourn Adonis, while at one of the official festivals of the state calendar, the Thesmophoria in honor of Demeter, citizen women spent three days away from their homes camped out on the Pnyx, performing rituals, and – it appears – enjoying themselves with a good deal of laughter, and even obscenity. Indeed, women's festivals seem typically to have permitted the kinds of behavior normally frowned upon, one of their functions seemingly being to provide a temporary escape from the repetition and potential drudgery of their everyday lives.

Another important function of festivals was to allow particular social and political groups to express their communal identity. The festivals of the Attic demes, for example, enabled the peoples of the various neighborhoods and villages to gather together at local sanctuaries. In addition to this, there were great civic occasions, such as the Panathenaea, and the Dionysia in honor of Dionysus, when large numbers of the population had an opportunity to worship the gods, take part in processions, enjoy a communal meal, or spectate at athletic or dramatic competitions. This section will focus on one of these festivals, the Panathenaea, which not only demonstrates the importance of communality in the lives of the Athenians but enables us to explore in more detail the Athenians' special bond with their patron deity.

The greatest festival in the Athenian religious calendar, the Panathenaea enabled the people to worship Athena. Indeed, its main ritual event was a procession though the city up to the Acropolis to present a new *peplos* ("robe") to her statue. The festival also enabled the people to get together in a communal expression of unity. It is all too easy for us to overlook the impact of large gatherings in shaping national identity. Although, as we have seen, Athens was large by Greek standards, it was far smaller

than the modern nation-state. A high percentage of the population would have had the opportunity to gather together on this occasion in ways that occur rarely in modern western society.

To understand the significance of a festival, it is always worth exploring the myths with which it is connected; in the case of the Panathenaea, we are dealing with a festival rich in mythic associations. It celebrated two myths which concerned Athena's relationship with Zeus: her birth out of his head, and the gigantomachy (the battle between the gods and the giants) in which she fought alongside her father. In addition, as we have seen, its founder was none other than Erichthonius. This tradition has major implications for understanding its communal appeal, attributing as it did the establishment of the Athenians' premier festival to the ancestral hero who had a special relationship with the goddess.

A discussion of the events at the Panathenaea benefits from a chronological approach, because it meant different things in different periods of Athenian history. This takes us to another reason why this festival merits particular attention, namely that it shows how religion was adapted and developed in response to changing needs of the people. As Athens developed into a major power in the Greek world, the festival developed accordingly. In other words, it is a festival with a history, one that forms part of Athenian history of the archaic and classical periods.

The first date of significance is 566 BC, when a major innovation was attributed to Peisistratos. This was a few years before he gained his first period as tyrant, but shows that he was already an influential figure in the city. He introduced a grander version of the festival every fourth year: the Great Panathenaea, an eight-day long event with celebrations and competitions to rival in prestige and display the major quadrennial festivals of the Greek world, such as the Olympic and Pythian Games. It included a full program of sporting contests for athletes from all over Greece including boxing, wrestling, and chariot races. There were torch races too, a male beauty contest, and a regatta in the harbor. It was also a poetic and musical occasion, with competitions for *aulos* and *kithara* players, and recitations of the Homeric poems.

The procession of the Great Panathenaea was splendid, involving participants from different walks of life: male, female, citizen, metic and also former slaves. Starting at the Dipylon Gate, the festival wound its way through the city along the Panathenaic Way up to the Acropolis. On reaching the temple of Athena Nike, it paused in order to sacrifice a cow, although the main goal was the altar of Athena Polias for a sacrifice of at least a hundred cows. From a modern western religious perspective, in which animal sacrifice is alien, it is hard to grasp the noise and excitement that would have been generated by this part of the festival. With so many animals to slaughter, the sacrifice would have lasted for several hours, accompanied throughout by ritual screaming and the noise of the animals, while the air would have been filled with smoke from the fat.

What Peisistratos' motives were in enlarging the festival is unrecoverable, although as we will see presently he was all too aware of the potential of religious spectacle to promote his own ends as a politician. In any case, the festival was from now on the greatest event in the calendar. Having attained this status, subsequent innovations took place in response to major events in the city's history. After the Persian Wars, a trireme on wheels from the naval victory at Salamis was introduced into the procession, with a sail that seems to have been in the form of a massive *peplos* depicting the

gigantomachy. What this innovation seems to be doing is updating the mythic significance of the battle, making its conflict between the forces of "good" (gods) and "evil" (giants) stand as a mythic precursor of Athens' encounter with her "barbarian" enemies, the Persians.

Another development occurred around the middle of the century, by which time Athens had grown into great power with a large maritime empire, the "Delian League." The League's headquarters had originally been the island of Delos, home of a major cult of Apollo, but in 454 BC they were transferred to Athens. With the city now confident enough to assert itself as an imperial power, Athena was effectively promoted to patron deity of the whole empire. From now on each allied city was required to participate in the festival, and to provide a panoply and a sacrificial cow. This development exemplifies how the major festival of the Athenian state has its own history. Ways of worshiping Athena evolved in accordance with the city's development. (See Chapter 26 for more on the Panathenaea.)

Religion and Politics: The Return of Peisistratos and the Scandals of 415

In looking at Athenian religion, we are given a unique opportunity to trace the development of its cults and beliefs. As Parker points out, "whereas histories of Greek religion and histories of Greece commonly pursue parallel paths at some distance from one another, an account of Attic religion constantly intersects with ordinary Athenian history" (1996:3). This section will examine events in two periods in order to demonstrate the interaction of religion with the history of the city.

The first instance is an audacious act by the ousted tyrant Peisistratos that enabled him to return triumphantly from exile in the 550s BC. He entered the city in a chariot driven by a tall and beautiful young woman called Phye whom he had dressed up in armor, while messengers were sent on ahead to announce that Athena herself was welcoming him home. According to Herodotus, our source for what took place, "believing that the woman was the goddess herself, the citizens worshiped this person, and welcomed Peisistratos" (1.60).

The event lets us take further our discussion above of the place of myth in Athens, even though on face of it, as a historical event, it might seem to lack mythic dimensions. It may seem out of place too in a discussion of ritual. Rituals are, after all, repeated actions that depend for their efficacy upon rites being performed in the correct way, by designated personnel at appropriate locations. This, in contrast, was a one-off event outside the religious calendar. But the reason Peisistratos' action worked is that it used mythic and ritual elements in such a way as to generate a range of religious responses.

Herodotus expresses astonishment that the Athenians, a people famed for their rationality, should have let themselves be taken in by a "ridiculous trick." But there is no need to place undue emphasis upon Herodotus' authorial intervention, for it serves his purposes as a historian to adopt a rationalistic position (see Sinos 1998:86–8). We might just as easily adopt an opposite interpretation of the event, seeing it as exemplifying the Athenians' dedication to religious phenomena. They were, after all,

the people known to be more devoted than any other to *ta theia*. So we will leave Herodotus to one side, and focus on the messages and allusions conveyed by what Peisistratos did.

Athena was never simply thought of as a figurehead by the Athenians; so intimate was her bond with the city that she was thought to be willing to intervene on its behalf. To an extent what Peisistratos was doing was acting out the sentiments expressed in the poem of Solon we looked at earlier. By riding alongside the "goddess," he was signaling her approval of himself as the rightful leader of Athens. What he was also doing, however, was evoking Athena's wider, panhellenic, persona as the patron of heroes. Peisistratos was in effect setting himself up as a new protégé of the goddess: an individual who merited her assistance just like the heroes of old. What is more, the fact that the entry to Athens took place on a chariot suggests that he had one particular heroic antecedent in mind above all others: Heracles. A hero with considerable popularity in archaic Athens, Heracles was frequently depicted riding in a chariot driven by Athena (see Boardman 1972). But what was so clever was Peisistratos' avoidance of specific comparison with the hero because he was not dressed as him. In effect, he was having it both ways. Not only did the chariot ride evoke Heracles' journey, but he managed to construct his own particular special bond with the goddess.

Also, we have to remember that Peisistratos seems to have been aware of the potential for large-scale communal occasions to unite the people. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the figure that founded the Great Panathenaea was able to use a religious event for his own political ends. From this, I would suggest one further heroic parallel: Erichthonius, the hero specially favored by Athena, and who founded the Panathenaea. We might also interpret Peisistratos in this context as a sort of second Erichthonius – effectively a second founder, or even re-founder, of the festival.

We could go further still and see the Panathenaea, with its great procession in honor of Athena, as a cultic parallel for what took place. But again, straightforward comparison is impossible, because the Panathenaic procession did not include transportation of an image of the goddess. To find a better ritual parallel, we need to look to another of Athena's festivals, the Plynteria, when the statue of Athena was undressed and conveyed, probably by a procession, to the sea to be bathed. Or for a closer parallel still, we might look beyond the cult of Athena, to festivals such as the Great Dionysia, which involved the transportation of the god's cult image between various sites: its home on the Acropolis slopes, a temple near the Academy, and the theater. But to seek a single candidate or even group of candidates for the inspiration behind the festival risks missing the genius of what Peisistratos did. His chariot ride was an act packed with religious allusions that produced such a show of communality that he was able to unite the people behind him and regain political supremacy.

We turn now to events that generated a religious outburst during a later period in Athenian history. But whereas Peisistratos inspired the community to respond as a group to the messages conveyed by his actions, these events contributed to an already existing state of political instability and culminated in a major impiety scandal. At this time, Athens was lacking a single strong leader to direct religious feeling. The politician who had come closest to doing this was Pericles, but he had been dead for many years, while the most dominant active politician, Alcibiades, was one of those implicated in the scandal.

In the summer of 415 BC, the city was in the midst of preparations for a massive naval attack on Sicily. While the fleet was getting ready to depart, the city experienced, in the words of one of our sources, "a number of inauspicious signs and portents" (Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 18.2). Of these, one that generated a particularly heightened response was the celebration of the Adonia:

> In many places in the city, images of the god were being laid out for burial and funeral rites were being held for them, accompanied by the wailing cries of the women, so that all those who cared for things such as these were troubled, fearing that the mighty expedition, equipped with such brilliance and vitality, might wither away in its prime and come to nothing. (Plutarch, *Nicias* 13.7; cf. *Alcibiades* 18.2–3)

This reaction involved an extraordinary inversion of the status of Adonis. As a foreign deity worshiped in a curious manner, he was normally a marginal figure, perhaps even the most marginalized of all the beings worshiped in the city. Yet in the summer of 415 the women's lamentations over this youth, who died in his prime, contributed to the sense of unease over the fate of the fleet.

These feelings were compounded by an audacious act of impiety (*asebēma*) that stunned the city. Such was its impact that it was interpreted not only as a bad omen for the expedition, but as a conspiracy against the entire democratic system. One morning, close to the time when the fleet was due to depart, the people woke up to find that most of their herms had been vandalized. Damaging any statue would be an act of impiety, but these mutilations were especially sacrilegious. As we have seen, the statues were found in porches, where they served the purpose of protecting temples and houses. What the perpetrators did was to attack the deity who protected the places where gods and people dwelt.

The seriousness of the act becomes further apparent when we consider Hermes' divine roles. He was the mediator who presided over boundaries, including two that were especially inauspicious in the circumstances: the passage of souls from this world to the underworld, and travel in general. To compound matters, he was the messenger of the gods who was thought to intervene between the human and divine worlds, and thereby help maintain a healthy relationship with the gods. In other words, the vandalism had ramifications for the whole channel of communication with the gods that Athenian religion provided. As Grote wrote, an equivalent would be a Spanish or Italian town having all its images of the Virgin defaced: in effect leaving the town "godless" (1855:168).

There was an immediate and extreme response to the sacrilege. The demos offered financial rewards and immunity from prosecution for anyone who could supply details about any other acts of impiety. And they found one in particular when information was received that groups of aristocrats, among them Alcibiades and another prominent citizen, Andocides, had been conducting performances of the Eleusinian Mysteries in private houses. These were, in the words of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, "the awful mysteries that are not to be transgressed, pried into, or divulged, for reverence for the gods checks the voice" (478–9). Yet, as set out in one of the speeches of Lysias (probably written for a prosecution of Andocides in 400 or 399 BC for a separate offence):

> This man put on a ceremonial robe. He mimicked the sacred rites and revealed them to those who were not initiates. He gave voice to words that must not be spoken. This was why priests and priestesses stood facing the west and cursed him, shaking out their purple robes according to ancient and ancestral custom. (Lysias 6.51 (trans. Todd); cf. Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 22.3, on the curses against Alcibiades)

In a sense, what these men did was even more serious than the mutilation of the herms. That vandalism constituted an overt act of impiety. What is striking about the performances of the Mysteries is that they at once showed contempt for the cult yet adhered in certain respects to proper cult practice – appropriate clothing was worn, ritual language was spoken, and ritual acts were performed. But the perpetrators also did something that defied proper religious practice by performing the rites in the wrong place before the wrong people. This would be inappropriate in any cultic context, but as the rites were the Eleusinian Mysteries, their actions took on an even greater degree of gravity. Indeed, their actions emphasize by contrast what was so clever about Peisistratos' ceremonial procession with "Athena." The tyrant's act evoked a number of cultic and mythic parallels without emulating any single one of them; these men in contrast performed a specific sacred rite in such a way as to subvert the main tenets of polis religion.

The response to the profanations was extreme. There were summary arrests and executions, ultimately leading to the exile of Alcibiades and Andocides. Indeed, the desire to discover the perpetrators led to the closest thing in ancient Greece to a religious persecution. What took place has implications for our understanding of the nature and extent of religious tolerance in the city. Athenian religion was non-dogmatic and receptive to foreign influences and new beliefs. Added to this, it was non-credal in that it lacked a central authority or set of directives setting out what people should believe, or not believe. But its religion was an open system only so long as traditional practices and gods were not seen to be disrespected.

Conclusion

The divine beings, practices, myths, and events discussed in this chapter demonstrate the integral place of religion in ancient Athens. From the earliest times, our sources express the Athenians' distinctive relationship with the gods, notably their patron Athena, and reveal the various rites and festivals that enabled them to worship these beings. Although rooted in tradition, it was a system ever on the move. The gods, myths, and practices evolved as the city developed, with religion persistently interacting with the history of the city.

With this in mind, let us return to one of the questions posed earlier in this chapter, namely: were the Athenians more religious than other peoples, or did their religious system develop in response to the varied needs of a large polis? Of course the answer is "both:" the existence of a large population led to the development of a great number of cults and to large-scale communal events unique in polis religion. This provided a special intensity to the Athenians' relationship with their gods, which in turn helps account for the particular communal displays we see, such as the great processions at the Panathenaea and the Dionysia. It also helps to explain why it was that the city

reacted so strongly to the impieties of 415 BC. "Famous Athens, divine polis" is how Pindar described the city (fr. 76 Maehler). His words were probably composed in the second quarter of the fifth century, before many of the developments outlined in this chapter took place, but they sum up nicely how far Athens' reputation was indistinguishable from its religious system.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Two of the introductory guides to Greek religion, Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992 and Mikalson 2004a, draw extensively upon Athenian evidence, while Price and Kearns 2004 includes numerous relevant entries. On the place of polis religion in the study of Greek religion more broadly, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1990.

Traditional cults, and above all, foreign imports, are the subject of Garland 1991. Specific categories of divine beings are examined in Kearns 1989 (heroines), Stafford 2000 (abstractions), and Larson 2001 (nymphs, a type of being not discussed in this chapter). Though outmoded in its interpretations, Herrington 1955 provides a discussion of the Athenian cult of Athena, while Deacy and Villing 2001 and Deacy (forthcoming) examine her worship throughout the Greek world. Studies of other gods include Rosenzweig 2004 (Aphrodite), Simms 1998 (Adonis), Nixon 1995 (Demeter), Aleshire 1991 (Asclepius), Sourvinou-Inwood 1988a (Brauronian Artemis), Versnel 1987 (Cronus), and Winkler and Zeitlin 1990 (Dionysus and the Dionysia). On the principal cult site, the Acropolis, see Hurwit 1999 and Hurwit 2004. Cults of the demes are considered in Mikalson 1977.

The classic study of Athenian festivals is Deubner 1932. Works in English are Mikalson 1975, Parke 1977, and Simon 1983. The Panathenaea has generated extensive discussion: see, e.g., Neils 1992 and 1996.

An excellent overview of Athenian myths is provided in Parker 1987a. A book-length introductory work is Tyrrell and Brown 1991. The autochthony myth is explored in Loraux 1993, whose title has been adapted for one of this chapter's sub-sections.

The major works on the history of Athenian religion are Parker 1996, which covers the period ca. 750–ca. 250 BC, and Parker 2005. Mikalson 1998 deals with the hellenistic period. On Peisistratos' journey, see Connor 2000 and Sinos 1998. On the scandals of 415 BC, see Furley 1996, Osborne 1985, and Murray 1990c.

The relationship between religion and tragedy is discussed in Sourvinou-Inwood 2003. Humphreys 2004 applies modern interpretative models to Athenian religion. Dillon 2001 explores women's religion throughout Greece, notably in Athens.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Daniel Ogden for inviting me to write this chapter, and for the suggestion that I adopt an "Athena-centric" approach. This chapter was completed during a lively teaching term at Roehampton University. I would like to make a special reference to my students, whose responses to aspects of Athenian myth and cult blurred the all too usual division between teaching and research. I am indebted to my husband for supporting me throughout the process of writing.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Religious System at Sparta

Nicolas Richer

Writing in the fifth century BC, Herodotus of Halicarnassus explains how the Lacedaemonians had been able to expel the Pisistratids from Athens. He says that the Athenian Alcmaeonids bribed the Pythia. She had persuaded the Spartans to take action against the Pisistratids, despite the ties of hospitality they maintained with Laconia, by repeatedly instructing them to do so. In recounting the event the historian notes that the Lacedaemonians "put considerations of the gods before considerations of men" (5.63; cf. also Pausanias 3.5.4). In context, Herodotus' judgment could be taken to indicate that Lacedaemonians had a religious sensibility superior to that of the other Greeks, in degree if not in kind. We do indeed possess a wealth of evidence, textual and archaeological, for Lacedaemonian religious practices. (The Spartans were a subset of the Lacedaemonians, namely the ones that came from Sparta itself, the principal city of Laconia. They controlled other free men, the "perioeci," who lived in the area around the city and mobilized at the Spartans' command. In ancient sources the term "Lacedaemonians" is clearly often used to designate the Spartans, but it is preferable to preserve the terms employed in ancient texts. On the distinction between the Spartans and the Lacedaemonians, see Herodotus 7.234 and 9.70. In this instance, at 5.63, Herodotus says that the *Lacedaemonians* intervened in Athens as a result of the consultations made at Delphi by the *Spartans*.)

Evidence for the Spartans' religious beliefs and practices is quite plentiful, albeit thinly spread. It is provided principally by the historians of the classical period, Herodotus (ca. 484–420 BC), Thucydides (ca. 460–400 BC) and Xenophon (ca. 430–354 BC), and by two authors of the second century AD, Plutarch (ca. AD 50–120) and especially Pausanias Periegetes "the Traveler" (whose *floruit* was ca. AD 160–180). Plutarch and Pausanias cite earlier authors and can combine information bearing on the practices of the archaic and classical periods with material from the hellenistic or Roman periods. Since the beginning of the twentieth century a number of Greek and British excavations have brought artifacts and inscriptions to

light (see Cartledge 1998:46–7); admittedly, these are typically quite late, from the Roman period. Several Laconian cups from the sixth century BC, which have sometimes been discovered outside Laconia itself, also provide insights into the Laconian religious imagination (Pipili 1987; Stibbe 1972, 2004).

It seems that the figures of the Spartan pantheon and the cult practices of Laconia did not differ in fundamentals from those familiar from elsewhere in the Greek world. In this chapter we will first look at the ways in which the gods presided over and intervened in the full range of human activities. Then we will consider the fashion in which the whole structure of daily life was sacralized, and finally we will investigate how the dead could be put to the service of the living.

The Principal Cults

In the Spartan mind, as in that of the Greeks of the archaic and classical periods more generally, men lived in a world in which the manifestations of supernatural powers were to be found everywhere. One had to secure the favor of such powers by appropriate actions. This sort of thinking and behavior can be seen to have underpinned the entirety of the young Spartans' education, and it can also be seen to have informed the conduct of adults in war and peace alike.

Initiation and communal life under the care of the gods

According to Polemon of Ilium, an author whose *floruit* was ca. 190 BC, the nurses (*titthai*) of young Spartan boys used to participate in a cult associated with their nurturing function, as its name reveals: the festival of the Tithēnidia was organized in honor of Artemis Corythalia, and held before her image (*FHG* iii 142 fr. 86, at Athenaeus 139a–b).

According to Herodotus, growing girls were placed under the protection of Helen, wife of Menelaus (on Helen at Sparta see Calame 1977:1.333–50; 1981; 2001:191–202). The historian clearly implies that Helen was supposed to sponsor their marriages. The historian gives us an *aition*, an explanatory tale, for the establishment of Helen's cult in a temple at Therapne, above Phoibaion, to the east of Sparta. He tells how a nurse presented the ugly girl baby in her charge to the statue of Helen, and an unknown lady (Helen, we are to understand) glanced at the baby on the way out. The girl became the most beautiful of all the women of Sparta (6.61; cf. also Isocrates, *Encomium of Helen* 63, where the fourth-century Athenian orator tells that at Therapne Helen and Menelaus have the right to receive sacrifices not as heroes but as gods; and Pausanias 3.19.9). Excavations at the Menelaion (for which see R.W.V. Catling 1992) have produced two archaic objects with dedications, one to Helen and Menelaus (the pair constitute Sparta's royal couple in the Homeric poems, as is well known), and the other to Helen alone (see Catling and Cavanagh 1976).

But other powers too watched over the transition to adult life. The significance of Orthia's cult can be gauged from the numbers of archaic period lead figurines found in her sanctuary – in excess of 100,000. These figurines (for the dating of which see Boardman 1963) are between 2.5 and 8 centimeters high and represent a winged female figure (Orthia herself?), warriors, animals, etc. (Fitzhardinge 1980:118–21,

with illustration; Wace 1929). Orthia's Spartan sanctuary seems to have been the theater for an initiatory ordeal in which young men stole cheeses from the deity's altar while being whipped (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 2.9). Later, in the Roman period, the ordeal was probably made harsher in order to provide a bloody spectacle. At this point an actual theater was built to enable a large crowd to witness the ordeal in full detail (Ducat 1995a; Kennell 1995, esp. 127–9). It was only at a late date that Orthia became "Artemis Orthia" (as, e.g., at Pausanias 3.16.7). Laconian inscriptions make no mention of this new name until, it seems, around AD 50 (Hodkinson 2000:300 n. 30; Woodward 1929:308–74).

But male powers also protected the activities of young men. Initiatory homosexual relationships (for the reality of which see the measured comments of Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 2.12–14) could be placed under the protection of Apollo, the mythical *erastēs* of Hyacinthus. The association between the two figures (for which see Sergent 1984:102–17, 1986:84–96) was recalled in the iconography of the Amyclaion, the sanctuary of Apollo at Amyclae, which was built some 6 kilometers to the south of Sparta by the architect Bathycles of Magnesia in the mid-sixth century BC (Faustoferri 1996, especially 278, 292, 294). Finally, to judge from Pausanias, young men would make sacrifice, chiefly to Achilles, before fighting each other in groups on an island at Platanistas (3.14.8–10 and 20.8). Platanistas was a place "planted with plane trees," the location of which is uncertain. It was perhaps to the west of Sparta, on a tributary on the right back of the Eurotas. Plato, the Athenian philosopher of the fourth century BC, may imply that something similar was already taking place in his own day (*Laws* 633b).

Thus, young Spartiates made their gradual approach towards adulthood under the protection of deities who performed the functions of *kourotrophia* ("child-rearing") for them, to a greater or lesser extent. One derivation proposed for the name Orthia sees the deity as so named because she ensured that young men grew up straight (*orthos*; see Calame 1977:1.289–94, 2001:165–7).

Once adult, the Spartans continued to conduct their lives with deep concern for the gods, whether in peace or war.

Gods and cults of peacetime activities

The oldest ancient text to mention the Spartan gods is the Great Rhetra, a text datable to around 700 BC that laid down the principles of political debate, which is preserved by Plutarch (*Lycurgus* 6.2 and 8):

> After the foundation of a sanctuary of Zeus Skyllanios and Athena Skyllania,
> after dividing into tribes and *ōbai*,
> after establishing a 30-strong *gerousia*, together with *archēgetai*,
> hold *apellai* at regular intervals between Babyka and Knakion,
> and in this way introduce proposals and set them aside,
> but the decision and sanction belongs to the people.
> But if the people speaks crookedly, the elders and the *archēgetai* are not constrained.

This text, which has been the subject of detailed commentaries (for the sundry interpretations and bibliography, see Richer 1998a:93–109; Maffi 2002), was

reshaped into the form that Diodorus transmits (7.12.6). He claims to be citing a Delphic oracle, whilst supplying a text very close to the paraphrase that Plutarch attributes to Tyrtaeus (*Lycurgus* 6.10). We see that the two gods most anciently attested at Sparta are Zeus and Athene (the meaning of the epithet Skyllanios and its feminine version Skyllania remains uncertain). We also find here an indirect mention of Apollo, since *apellai*, the festivals in honor of the god, whose name is attested at Delphi, are referred to and these had to be organized on a regular basis (the Greek text literally says "from season to season"). In the archaic period these festivals could have provided the opportunity for the convocation of the assembly of the citizens. (The term *apella* is improperly applied to the assembly itself; it should rather be referred to as the *ekklēsia*, as at Athens, and this is the term by which it is referred to in all classical period sources; cf. Ste. Croix 1972:346–7).

The overriding importance of these three divine powers is clear from other evidence: the only priests we know to have existed at Sparta in the classical period are the two kings (the two royal families, those of the Agiads and the Eurypontids, each supplied a king, concurrently). Herodotus actually tells us, "These are the prerogatives [*gerea*] the Spartans concede to their kings: two priesthoods, those of Zeus Lakedaimōn [of Lacedaemon] and of Zeus Ouranios [Of heaven] . . . " (6.56). His phraseology leaves it uncertain whether the king of one of the two ruling families occupied the priesthood of one of these aspects of Zeus, whilst his colleague occupied the other one. If this was the case, then, since the Agiad family seems to have enjoyed a certain pre-eminence in status (6.51–2), we might be tempted to infer that the former of the priesthoods mentioned devolved to this family. But it remains possible that the two kings exercised both priesthoods collegially. At any rate, the great importance attributed to the king of the gods at Sparta is demonstrated both by his appearance in the Great Rhetra and by the fact that he had the kings for his priests.

Athene shared other epithets with Zeus: they are Agoraios and Agoraia, patrons of the agora (Pausanias 3.11.9), Xenios and Xenia, patrons of strangers (3.11.11), and Amboulios and Amboulia, counselors (3.13.6). Zeus and Athene are also associated in coordinated sacrifices (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 13.2). But Athene's principal epithets were Poliouchos, "Holder of the city," or, we might say, "Mistress of the city," and Chalkioikos, "Of the bronze house," because the walls of her temple on the Spartan acropolis were decorated with illustrated bronze panels (Pausanias 3.17.2–3; for further references, see Wide 1893:49). This temple, the work of Gitiadas, dated from the end of the sixth century. It may well have occupied a site formerly occupied by another religious building. (For this temple, and in particular on its name, see Piccirilli 1984 and the evidence collected by Musti and Torelli 1991 ad loc., 228–9. For the sanctuary's architectural arrangement, see the brief discussion at Stibbe 1996:24–5. For its date, see Waywell 1999:6 and the references in n. 17).

Zeus and Athene aside, another god who can be seen to have watched over the general prosperity of Sparta was Apollo. Honor was done to this god each year in the Hyacinthia festival (for which see Richer 2004a, 2004b), and it is likely that this was the occasion of the annual replacement of Apollo's *chitōn*, tunic, which was woven in the sanctuary of the Leucippids, the wives of the Dioscuri (Pausanias 3.16.1–2; cf. also Euripides, *Helen* 1465). Indeed, among the many other divine powers worshiped at Sparta, the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, seem to have been the object of particular veneration. Plutarch describes their aniconic representation: "The Spartans call

ancient images of the Dioscuri *dokana*: these consist of two parallel wooden bars, linked by crosspieces" (*On Fraternal Love* 1 = *Moralia* 478a–b). This configuration seems to correspond with one found in Laconian reliefs (Figure 15.1; cf. also the Argenidas relief in the Museum of Verona, no. 555; Tod and Wace 1906:113–18). It is also found in the modern zodiacal symbol for Gemini (II). It is noteworthy that when, in around 506 BC, according to Herodotus, a law was made at Sparta, "forbidding both kings to accompany an army on campaign [. . . this same law required] one of the Tyndarids similarly to be left behind [in Sparta]" (5.75). The Tyndarids are the Dioscuri, both being regarded as the sons of Tyndareus as opposed to Zeus, although in myth, as is well known, Castor was the son of Tyndareus and Pollux the son of Zeus. This text of Herodotus seemingly confirms that each of the vertical beams represented one of the two brothers, and their tight association with the kings on campaign may be explained by the fact that the Spartan kings were held to be descended from a pair of twins, Eurysthenes and Procles (Herodotus 6.52). Accordingly, an analogy obtained in the Spartan mind between the Dioscuri and the two kings that were responsible for the city's military successes.

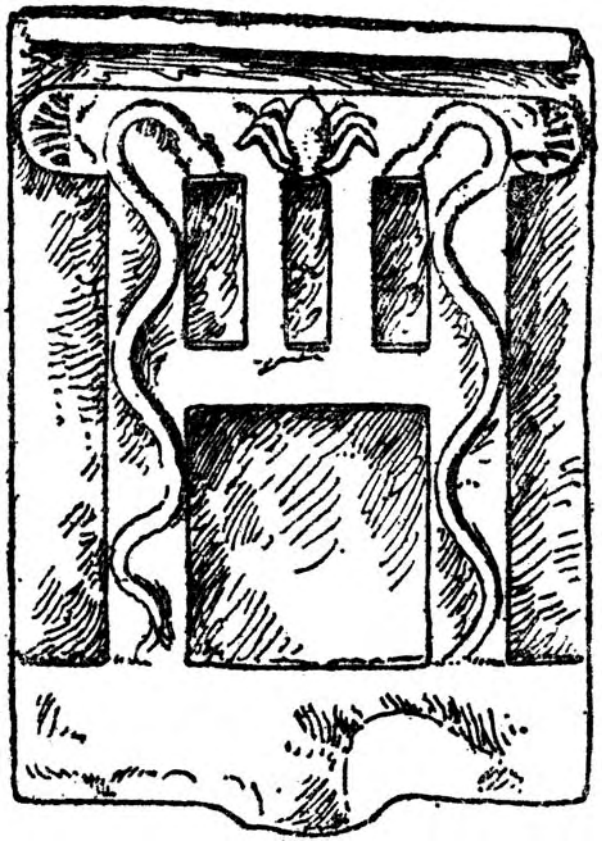

Figure 15.1 Dokana. Sparta Museum no. 588. Based on Tod and Wace 1906:193 fig.68 (catalog no. 588)

The kings owed the religious functions they performed as priests, as they did their political positions, to hereditary title. In around 330 BC Aristotle noted that the kings were generally responsible for the relations between the community as a whole and the gods (*ta pros tous theous*; *Politics* 1285a6–7). Consequently, the kings occupied a special position at Sparta. In detailing the kings' prerogatives (*gerea*), Herodotus significantly indicates that they took charge of the preservation of oracles from Delphi: "It is they that keep the oracular responses, and the Pythian messengers share the knowledge of them" (6.57). As Anton Powell has shown, such a prerogative could furnish the kings with arguments with which to influence political decisions, and they could perhaps suppress obstructive prophecies, but, as he also notes, "The question whether Spartan authorities often *consciously* manipulated divination for their political ends is difficult" (1994:290). (On the oracle of Pasiphae at Thalamai, to the west of Taygetus, and on the political significance of the oracles that could be given to the ephors there, see Richer 1998a:199–212).

Furthermore, the kings were not the only ones to inherit public functions of a religious character. According to Herodotus again, "the heralds [*kērykes*], the musicians of the *aulos* [a sort of oboe] and the sacrificers [*mageiroi*] inherit their father's trade" (6.60; cf. Berthiaume 1976, 1982). Herodotus subsequently returns to the heralds and tells us that there was at Sparta a sanctuary (*hieron*) of Talthybius, the herald of Agamemnon, and also that there were "descendants of his called Talthybiads, who have had the prerogative [*geras*] of undertaking all heralds' missions from Sparta" (7.134).

The Spartans believed that the qualities that enabled one to appeal to the gods with greatest efficacity attached to individuals and could be inherited. So, for the sake of effectiveness, they had to ensure that some functions of a religious character were transmitted within defined families. (We may think also of the manner in which some families, such as the Eteoboutadai, the Praxiergidai, the Bouzygai, the Eumolpids, and the Kerykes, retained defined religious functions at Athens.) But it was in the critical sphere of war, in which the future of the city was known to be at stake, that the hereditary religious role of the kings could be of particular value.

Gods and cults of war

Herodotus says of the Spartan kings of his own time that they have "the right to direct war where they want, and no Spartan can oppose them for risk of incurring pollution [*agos*]; . . . the right to sacrifice as many victims as they wish on external expeditions, and the right to keep the skins and chines of all victims" (6.56). This appears to show that in the fifth century the Spartan kings still had the appearance of sacred leaders of a sort, whose word had to be respected absolutely on pain of religious sanction. And Xenophon's *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* illustrates the distinctive religious role a king was still, in around 378–6 BC, supposed to play on military campaign (13.2–3, on which see Rebenich 1998 and Lipka 2002 ad loc.; for the date see Meulder 1989):

> But I wish . . . to describe how the king sets out on campaign with the army. First of all, in Sparta, he makes sacrifice to Zeus Leader of the Army [*Agētōr*] and to the deities

> associated with him. If the sacrifice is favorable, the Fire-Carrier takes the fire from the altar and walks at the head of all to the border. On arrival, the king sacrifices again to Zeus and Athena. Only if these deities show themselves favorable does he cross the border. The fire taken from these last sacrifices is henceforth carried before the army, and it never goes out. It is followed by victims of all sorts. Every time he makes sacrifice, the king begins before dawn, because he wants to be the first to win the deity's favorable regard.

After enumerating the important individuals who participate in the sacrifice, Xenophon adds, "So to see this you would think that others are nothing but amateurs in military matters, and that the Spartans alone are technicians [*technitai*] in the art of war" (13.5).

Clearly, in the eyes of Xenophon (an Athenian, of course, but one with an excellent knowledge of Sparta, since he was a close friend of Agesilaus II) the techniques the Spartans used to render the gods propitious in wartime were indicative of their science of war: because their engagement with the divine was particularly systematic, they could be seen as specialists in war who left nothing undone to secure victory. Furthermore, as Pritchett notes, "The *diabatēria*, or sacrifice at the frontier [i.e., that described by Xenophon], are attested only for Lakedaimonian armies" (1979:68).

In fact it seems that the Lacedaemonians were particularly anxious to win the favor of the powers relevant to or local to the field of the coming battle (Richer 1999b). It was probably with a view to this that they sacrificed systematically to Artemis Agrotera before a battle (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 13.8, and *Hellenica* 4.2.20). Such a sacrifice had, ordinarily, to be made at the start. One can explain it by the fact that the frontier areas that were often the theaters of combat were rustic and wild, and so devoted to Artemis Agrotera, protector of the hunting that took place there. In the event of unfavorable omens (so determined by reading the shape of the sacrificed victim's liver), another sacrifice could be organized, to another deity. In this event, the sacrifice might be addressed to a deity one believed to be particularly devoted to the area in which one was about to fight: thus the regent Pausanias called upon Cithaeronian Hera immediately prior to the battle of Plataea in 479 BC, according to Plutarch (*Aristides* 17–18). In such circumstances, loudly proclaimed requests and the explicit invocation of the deity to whom appeal was made were indispensable. At this point the leader of the army could demonstrate his intention to act in accordance with justice, and so avoid provoking the anger of the gods. Thus in 429 BC King Archidamus called the gods of the Plataean country to witness the justice of his actions (Thucydides 2.74.2–3), just as later, in 424 BC, Brasidas planned to act in a comparable fashion with regard to the local (*enchōrioi*) gods and heroes in Chalcidice (Thucydides 4.87.2).

Lacedaemonian conduct offers many instances of a clear wish to respect the will of the gods. Note in particular that at the beginning of the battle of Plataea the Lacedaemonians allowed the Persians to rain missiles down upon them so long as they failed to make a favorable sacrifice (Herodotus 9.61–2; for other examples see Pritchett 1971:113; 1979:68–70). Such a mental attitude can no doubt be explained to a certain extent, when we consider the manner in which, when at home, the citizens of Sparta lived their daily lives within a sacralized structure.

The Sacralized Structure of Daily Life

Space protected by sanctuaries

The Lacedaemonians stood out amongst the Greeks not least in their strong tendency to privilege supernatural factors over obvious phenomena. No doubt comparable studies could be made of other regions, not least Attica, but it should be noted how the Spartans seemingly wished to secure the protection offered by supernatural powers in living surrounded by sanctuaries, representations of the divine, votive objects, and tombs, at least to judge from the descriptions of Plutarch (*Lycurgus* 27.1 and 5) and above all Pausanias (3.11.1–18.5). These texts derive from the second century AD and describe centuries of cumulative construction, doubtless subsequent, for the most part, to the 464 BC earthquake. (For plans of Sparta see Figures 15.2 and 15.3 and the Guide to Further Reading below.)

Paul Cartledge has made the important suggestion that some sanctuaries of the Spartans served to mark the limits of their territory: "The limitary sanctuaries . . . are of two main sorts: first, those which formed a kind of *pomerium* (to borrow the Roman term) or sacred boundary around Sparta itself and, second, those which served to define Spartan citizen territory, the *politikē gē*, against the territory of the *perioikoi*" (1998:44; for a map of the civic territory of Sparta defined at Plutarch *Agis* 8.1, see Ducat 1995b:93). To the former category belonged the sanctuaries of Orthia on the east of the city and Artemis Issoria to the northwest; to the latter belonged, at a distance of several kilometers from Sparta, a sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus in the northeast, the Menelaion to the southeast, the Amyclaion to the south, and the Eleusinion to the southwest.

Eros was worshiped at a greater distance still from Sparta. The military effectiveness of this divine power was considered certain. He guaranteed the cohesion of the phalanx and was honored with a sacrifice prior to combat (Sosicrates *FGrH* 461 fr. 7 at Athenaeus 561e–f). The Laconian sanctuary dedicated to Eros was located at Leuctra, to the west of Taygetus, on the coastal route leading to Messenia (Pausanias 3.26.5).

A distinctive phenomenon is that of cultic doublets. Whilst at Sparta itself one could find the sanctuary of Orthia (Dawkins 1929), on the borders of the territory was a cult devoted to a deity who, if she was not precisely identical, must have been very similar to Orthia. Sanctuaries of Artemis are known, along the borders of Laconia, at Karyai (Pausanias 3.10.7), Limnai (3.2.6 and 3.7.4), Boiai (*IG* v.1 no. 952), and in the territory of Epidaurus Limera (Pausanias 3.23.10). (On Artemis Limnatis, Artemis Karyatis, and Artemis Orthia, see Calame 1977:1.253–97, 2001:142–69.) It is noteworthy that Artemis Issoria was worshiped in Sparta itself (Pausanias 3.14.2) and at Teuthrone on the west coast of the Laconian gulf, between Gythium and Cape Taenarum (3.25.4).

Similarly Poseidon was worshiped on the promontory of Taenarum (Thucydides 1.128.1 and 133; Strabo C363; Pausanias 3.25.4–8; see Wide 1893:33–5 for further references). And Poseidon of Taenarum was also honored in Sparta itself, where a *temenos* was dedicated to him, according to Pausanias (3.12.5). This deity too may be supposed to have had a military competence. Poseidon was evidently thanked for the

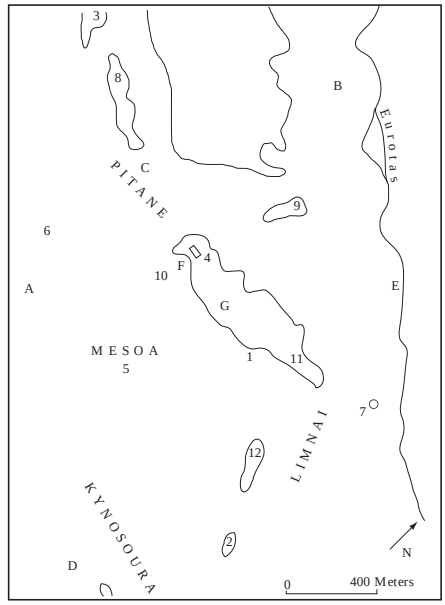

Figure 15.2 The most important cult places at Sparta
Many of the locations identified are very hypothetical; they have been deduced from the descriptions given by Pausanias. The numbers given in brackets refer to Pausanias, *Periegesis* Book 3.

Sanctuaries devoted to deities

1 Sanctuaries of Zeus Olympios and of Aphrodite Olympia (12.11)
2 Sanctuary of Zeus Euanemos ("Of fair wind") and of Hera Hypercheiria ("Whose hand is above"; i.e. "Protectress"?) (13.8)
3 Sanctuaries of Thetis (14.4), of Demeter Chthonia, and of Zeus Olympios (14.5)
4 Acropolis (17.1), where the sanctuary of Athena Poliouchos ("City-protecting") or Athena Chalkioikos ("Of the bronze house") is located (17.2–3)
5 Sanctuaries of the Dioscuri, the Charites, Eileithyia, Apollo Karneios ("Of the ram") and Artemis Hēgēmone ("Leader") (14.6)
6 Dioscuri Apheterioi ("Starters") (14.7) and Platanistas (14.8–15.1)
7 Sanctuaries of Orthia (16.7–11) and of Eileithyia (17.1)
8 Sanctuary of Artemis Issōria (14.2)
9 Sanctuary of Artemis Knagia (18.4–5)
10 Sanctuary of Poseidon Genethlios ("God of kin") (15.10)
11 Sanctuary of Aphrodite Morphō (located on a small hill) (15.10–11) and sanctuary of the Leucippids (Hilaeira and Phoibe) incorporating the room where a *chitōn*, a tunic, is woven annually for Amyclaean Apollo (16.1–2)
12 The Knoll and temple of Dionysus of the Knoll (*Kolōnatas*) (13.7)

***Herōa* and graves**

A Sanctuary of Helen, memorial of Alcman, sanctuary of Heracles (15.2–3)
B Extramural sanctuary thought to be devoted to Achilles (20.8)
C Graves of the Agiad kings (14.2)
D Royal graves of the Eurypontids (12.8)
E Sanctuary of Lycurgus (16.6)
F Theater (it existed during the Roman period at the latest) and *herōa* of Pausanias and of Leonidas (14.1)
G *Herōon* of Brasidas (14.1)

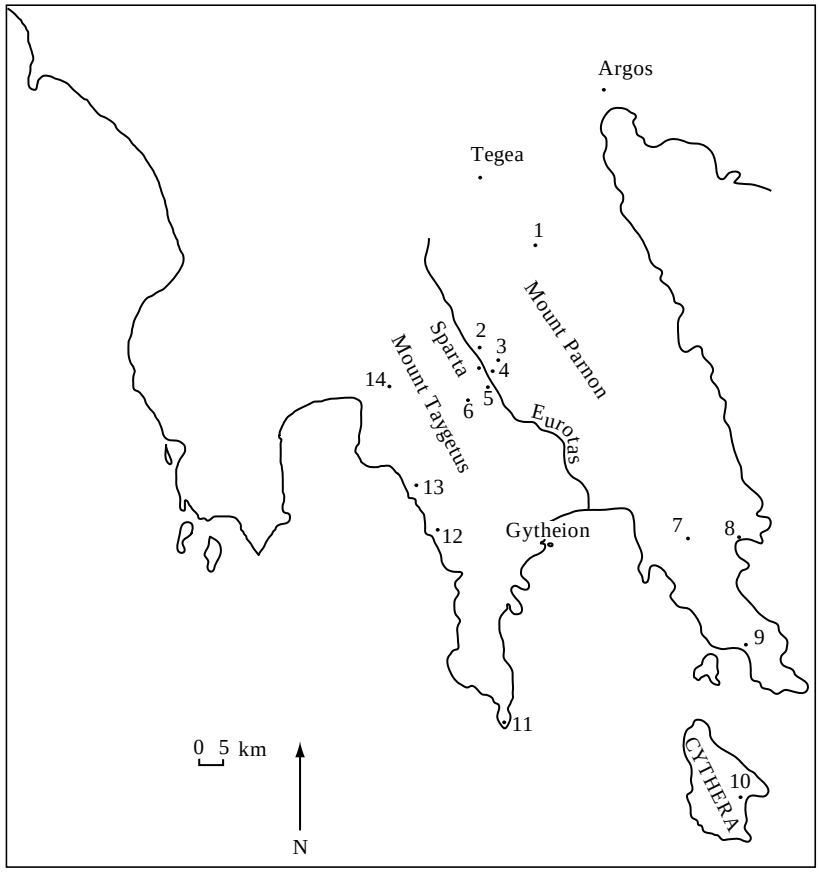

Figure 15.3 The most important Lacedaemonian sanctuaries outside Sparta. 1 Karyai (sanctuary of Artemis); 2 Mount Thornax (statue of Pythian Apollo); 3 Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus; 4 Menelaion (sanctuary of Helen and Menelaus); 5 Amyklaion (sanctuary of Amyclaean Apollo and Hyacinthus); 6 Eleusinion (sanctuary of Demeter and Kore); 7 Hyperteleaton (sanctuary of Apollo Hyperteleatas; center for the Eleutherolakonian League after the liberation of the perioeci from Sparta in 195 BC); 8 Epidauros Limera (sanctuary of Artemis); 9 Boiai (sanctuary of Artemis); 10 Sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania; 11 Cape Tainaron (sanctuary of Poseidon); 12 Thalamai (oracular sanctuary of Pasiphae); 13 Leuctra (sanctuary of Eros); 14 Limnai (sanctuary of Artemis, sited approximately)

naval victory at Aegospotami in 405, to judge from Lysander's dedication of a statue to him at Delphi, according to Pausanias (10.9.7).

Aphrodite too was present, in a distinctively military guise, both in Sparta and on the periphery (for Aphrodite at Sparta see Osanna 1990). She was endowed with a *naos*, sanctuary, on the Spartan acropolis that contained *xoana archaia*, ancient effigies (Pausanias 3.17.5), and here she had the epithet Areia. She also had, again in Sparta, a *naos archaios*, an ancient sanctuary, and this too contained a *xoanon* that represented the goddess in arms (3.15.10). The upper story of the temple was dedicated to the goddess under the name of Morpho; Pausanias himself stresses

that the character of this sanctuary was unique to the best of his knowledge. At Cythera, at the extreme edge of the territory, the goddess, under the name Ourania, was given another sanctuary, supposedly the most ancient (*archaiotaton*) in Greece, and here too she was represented as armed by her *xoanon* (3.22.1).

Furthermore, Sparta was protected by two statues of Apollo: one was to the north, on Mount Thornax, and Pausanias specifies that it resembled the other great statue of Apollo close to Sparta on the south side, that of Amyclae (3.10.8); this represented Apollo carrying a helmet, spear, and bow (3.19.2).

The Spartans' absolute mastery of their territory could find expression in their processions. Plutarch tells that the newly elected members of the *gerousia*, for example, would visit the gods, i.e. in their sanctuaries, and it seems likely that the sanctuaries concerned were those of Sparta itself (*Lycurgus* 26.6). To judge from Thucydides' discussion of an event datable to 425/4 BC, helots freed for their contributions in war could, after being garlanded, make a tour of the sanctuaries (Thucydides 4.80.30–4; for the date, see Richer 1998a:383–6; for the historicity of the event, see the contradictory views of Paradiso 2004 and Harvey 2004). The sanctuaries in question were probably those of Laconia, and the procedure could be seen as the undertaking of a symbolic defensive mission to protect the territory by circumambulating it from sacred place to sacred place.

More banally, processions from one part of the territory to another could be organized on a regular basis in association with festivals, for example that from Sparta to Amyclae during the Hyacinthia, or that from Helos to the Eleusinion at Bryseai or Kalyvia tis Sochas in its modern toponym (for the sanctuary of Demeter surnamed Eleusinian see Pausanias 3.20.5 and 7; for the games of the Laconian Eleusinia see Parker 1988:101; for Demeter in Laconia see Richer forthcoming (a)).

But space was evidently not the only thing marked out with religious reference points; time was too.

The calendar of Lacedaemonian festivals

In the *Laws* Plato stresses the importance of "the arrangement of days within the period of month, the arrangement of months within the period of each year, so that seasons and sacrifices and festivals, celebrated in due fashion because they will be ordered as nature itself indicates [*kata physin*], may enliven the city and keep it alert, give the gods the honors that are their due, and give men a clearer knowledge of all this" (809d). To clarify what Plato means here, we may note that it is a fact made explicit in antiquity (Geminus, *Elementa astronomiae* 7.7–9 and 15) and acknowledged by modern scholarship, that, in Caveing's words, "the dates of religious festivals are . . . strongly correlated in Greece with the phases of the moon, and especially with the full moon . . . but at the same time religious ritual is co-ordinated with the important moments of agricultural life, and it is crucial that it should be performed exactly within its annual seasonal framework" (1996:9; cf. also Soubiran 1978:9). Now, since the solar year does not coincide with a complete number of lunar months, in thirty-three solar years a date fixed according to a purely lunar calendar passes through the whole seasonal cycle. Accordingly, it is probable that the Lacedaemonians had, like other Greeks, to depend both on the movements of the moon and on those of the sun at the same time, and also on the apparent movement of other

stars, such as Sirius, the brightest star in the firmament, to fix the dates of their religious festivals (see Richer 1998a:155–98 for the astronomical observations undertaken by the Spartan ephors every eight years, probably at the time of the heliacal rising of Sirius). The request for sundials the Spartans made to Anaximander in the middle of the sixth century testifies to their interest in ordering the calendar in the best possible fashion (Diogenes Laertius 2.1). For them it was certainly a matter of carrying out the required religious celebrations at the most appropriate time, so as to ensure their efficacity.

The Hyacinthia festival marked the renewal of the world. It occupied ten days in the classical period, but later on only three. Its etiological myth is preserved by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 10.164–6; cf. Richer 2004a:85–6, 2004b:410–14), from whose words we can deduce that it was, in principle, organized in such a way that its end coincided with the full moon following the vernal equinox.

Two other important religious celebrations in Laconia were the Gymnopaidiai and the Karneia. During the Gymnopaidiai Apollo was honored in song, and this festival commemorated one or more battles, the Battle of the Champions, in which the Spartans were victorious over the Argives in 546 BC, and perhaps also the battle, unhappy but glorious, against the Persians at Thermopylae in 480 BC. The Karneia festival was a fertility ritual that commemorated the arrival of the Dorians and their Heraclid leaders in the Peloponnese (cf. Richer forthcoming (b); for this festival see also Chapter 12). It seems that the Gymnopaidiai festival, which could last from three to five days (Richer 2005b:246 n. 70, 249, including n. 95), was as a rule completed during the full moon closest to the time at which the heliacal rising of Sirius was observable at Sparta, probably August 1 or 2. The festival will accordingly have finished approximately between July 18 and August 17 (Richer 2005b:256–9). The Karneia, which lasted nine days, normally ended a lunar month after the Gymnopaidiai, and so approximately between August 16 and September 14, except when military considerations or, perhaps, the need to intercalate a month into the calendar determined otherwise.

There may have been a logical connection between the Hyacinthia and the Karneia, that of the alternating predominance of Apollo and Dionysus. Plutarch tells that at Delphi in winter one could "call upon Dionysus for three months in place of Apollo" (*Moralia* 389c = *On the "E" at Delphi* 9). There may have been an analogous phenomenon at Sparta: the rite of the *staphylodromoi* ("grape-cluster runners") expressed the importance of Dionysus during the Karneia prior to Apollo being given pride of place during the following Hyacinthia (Bekker *Anecdota Graeca* i 305 ll. 25–30, s.v. *staphylodromoi*).

The Spartan calendar was structured by many other festivals, and it is of particular note that, "Every day on which there is a new moon, and on the seventh day of every month, each [of the kings] is given, at the expense of the treasury, an adult victim for sacrifice in the temple of Apollo, together with a bushel of flour and a Laconian quart of wine" (Herodotus 6.57). And so religious life unfolded within a well-defined chronological framework of a sort that ensured that the Spartans always knew what action they needed to perform to make their contribution to the order of the world and their own happiness (for the importance of happiness, *eudaimonia*, in the Spartans' political project, see Richer 2001b).

The Spartans also established strong encouragements to self-control, conceived of as leading to happiness, in sacralizing the *pathēmata*.

The pathēmata

In speaking of his compatriots, Demaratus, the former king of Sparta, had said to Xerxes in 480 BC, "For, if they are free, they are not completely free: they have a master in the law [*despotēs nomos*]" (Herodotus 7.104). And Simonides, a contemporary of Demaratus cited by Plutarch, had characterized Sparta as being a "mortal-taming" city (*Agesilaos* 1.3: *damasimbrotos*; for this term see Powell 1994:277, and for the same idea see also Isocrates, *Archidamus* 59). The Spartans' submission to their law constituted a general principle that in practice informed their conduct at all times. The Spartans were in effect induced to master themselves, to master their own bodies, in the service of the city. They had to suppress their fear, allow themselves to be guided by restraint, tame their sex drive, be familiar with death, and control their needs for sleep and food. Hence, the *pathēmata* (as they are termed in Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 9.1), that is to say the bodily passions, were sacralized at Sparta. These *pathēmata* were *Phobos*, Fear (Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 9.1), *Aidōs*, Shame or Restraint (Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.35; Pausanias 3.20.10–11), *Hypnos*, Sleep (Pausanias 3.18.1), *Thanatos*, Death (Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 9.1 and Pausanias 3.18.1), *Gelōs*, Laughter (Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 9.1 and *Lycurgus* 25.4, including Sosibius *FGrH* 595 fr. 19), *Erōs*, Love (Sosicrates *FGrH* 461 fr. 7 at Athenaeus 561e–f; cf. Pausanias 3.26.5 for Leuctra in Laconia), *Limos*, Hunger or Famine (Callisthenes *FGrH* 124 fr. 13 at Athenaeus 452b; Polyaenus 2.15). The Spartans' sacralization of bodily passions seems to have constituted a very effective mechanism of ethical control. The role of *Phobos*, in particular, was not so much to inspire fear in the enemy as to instill respect for the law and its representatives in the Spartans. (On the *pathēmata* see Richer 1998a:217–33, especially 219–24 on *Phobos* and 224–6 on *Erōs* and the ephors, 1998b, 1999a, 2001a:52–5, 2001b: 31–3, and 2005a.)

The philosopher Plato was probably inspired by the Spartan model when he recommended the establishment of a law that ensured that everyone should declare "victory over pleasures" and display *enkrateia*, self-control. Writing in the fourth century, Plato thought (*Laws* 840c) that this law, rendered sacred, should be supported by social pressures: "As soon as one has succeeded in sacralizing it, this law will subjugate all souls and fill them with fear and obedience towards the prohibitions it enacts" (839c). And, speaking through the mouth of one of his characters, the Athenian, Plato also declares: "If the legislator wishes to subjugate one of these passions that enslave men most surely, the end will be easily achieved. All he need do is sacralize this public sentiment in the spirit of all alike, slaves, free men, children, women, the city as a whole, and, in this way he will have created a more secure stability for this law" (*Laws* 838d–e). In Xenophon's own view the Spartan model was genuinely effective. He believed that, by comparison with practices widespread in Greece, Laconian education produced "men who are the most disciplined and the most restrained, men who have the greatest control [*enkratesteroi*] of the desires one must suppress" (*Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 2.15).

Such a state of mind has led some modern scholars to suggest that divine authority may have answered an important psychological need for men accustomed to obey. This is the view of Hodkinson (1983:276) and Parker (1989:162), who observes, "Fear of the gods, *deisidaimonia*, was a particular form of the 'fear' which in Greek

thought was the foundation of social discipline." However, an admittedly widespread attitude of great restraint did not prevent the Spartans from sometimes regarding each other with suspicious eyes, as for example in the cases of Cleomenes I, who was indicted for not having taken Argos in favorable circumstances in 494 BC (Herodotus 6.82), and Pleistoanax, dethroned in 445 BC (Thucydides 2.21.1; Plutarch, *Pericles* 22).

In fact, all citizens were constantly judged on the merit of their actions (Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 25.2–3; cf. also 24.5), but only the better ones could be considered to act as supernatural protectors after death. New protectors could be given to Sparta by virtue of their behavior in accordance with accepted norms, measured by the yardstick of the *pathēmata*, and by virtue of the obedient and effective devotion they displayed towards the city (as suggested by analysis of Xenophon's portrait of Agesilaus: cf. Richer 1998b:24–6). A virtuous dead man could be considered as a protector of the community that he had served in life.

The Manufacturing of Heroes for the City: The Dead Lacedaemonians

Royal funerals

Herodotus gives us a detailed description of the ritual of royal funerals at Sparta:

> These are the rights that the Spartan community has bestowed upon its kings during their lifetime, but they are given the following when dead. Horsemen convey the message of what has happened all round Laconia and women go about beating cauldrons in the city. Whenever this happens, it is required that two people from each house, a man and a woman, adopt the defiled dress of mourning. Substantial penalties are imposed upon those that do not do this. The Lacedaemonians have the same customs upon the deaths of their kings as do the barbarians in Asia. Most of the barbarians employ the same customs on the deaths of their kings. For whenever a king of the Lacedaemonians dies, a certain number of *perioeci*, drawn from the whole of Lacedaemon but excluding the Spartans, are compelled to come to the funeral. These, the helots and the Spartans themselves assemble together and, together with women, are many thousands in number. They beat their brows vigorously and wail at length. They claim that ever the latest of the kings to have died was the best one. If one of their kings dies in war, they prepare an effigy [*eidōlon*] of him and carry it out to burial on a richly decorated bier. When they bury a king, they hold no market for ten days, nor any election of magistrates, but they mourn for this period. (6.58)

The importance of the death of one of the two kings for the Lacedaemonian community as a whole is demonstrated by the great number of participants and the duration of the mourning. This death could take place in war, and in this case Herodotus presents the manufacture of an effigy of the dead king as a general rule, although it can only have occurred once in his own time, when Leonidas fell at Thermopylae in 480 BC in such a way that his body could not be immediately transferred back to Sparta (his remains were taken back there forty years after the battle, according to Pausanias 3.14.1; cf. Richer 1994).

In general, even when they had not died as gloriously as Leonidas did, the kings of Sparta were treated not as men but as heroes, according to Xenophon (*Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 15.9). Furthermore, Sparta was protected on the borders of its conurbation by the tombs of the two royal dynasties, those of the Eurypontids, probably to the south, and those of the Agiads, probably to the northwest (Pausanias 3.12.8 and 14.2).

As to other tombs, Plutarch mentions the fact that "Lycurgus did not forbid the burial of the dead in the city," and that this relieved the young men of "the fear and horror of death" (*Lycurgus* 27.1). This notion should be understood, as it has been by the archaeologist Kourinou (2000:215–19 and 284), as an interpretation of the situation produced by Sparta's urban development. Tombs that were initially situated on the periphery of the four villages were enveloped in urban sprawl as the villages coalesced into a single town. Kourinou notes that tombs were not deliberately built outside the urban area thus developed until the first century BC (and, she observes, many tombs must have disappeared in the Roman period).

Most importantly, it seems that distinctions may have been made between the dead themselves.

A hierarchy of the dead

According to Plutarch the dead were hierarchized, not in accordance with their wealth in life, but in accordance with their merit and their devotion to the city: "It was forbidden to inscribe the names of the dead on tombs, except those of men who had fallen in war and women in the *hierai* category" (*Lycurgus* 27.3; for the debates on this text, see Brulé and Piolot 2002, 2004; Hodkinson 2000:237–70; Richer 1994). We should note the discovery of several funerary stelae referring to men who had died in war. It is probable that the *hierai* were women dedicated to religious functions (on women in religion at Sparta see Richer forthcoming (a)).

A general hierarchy of the dead obtained (Richer 1994): funerary honors were linked to the situation that the dead man had occupied in Lacedaemonian society and also to the bravery he had been able to demonstrate in combat. Above all, the varied styles of the funerals were doubtless a function of the strength of protection subsequent generations of Spartans anticipated from the dead. The dead were accordingly ranked, seemingly in the following order of increasing importance: (1) the anonymous; (2) (?)helots killed in battle; (3) (?)*perioeci* killed in battle; (4) women in the *hierai* category; (5) Spartans killed in battle; (6) *hirees*, people endowed with a certain charisma, a status to which the *aristoi*, the best of the Spartans killed in combat, were admitted, their quality being proven; (7) particularly deserving Spartan leaders, such as Brasidas, who died at Amphipolis in 422 BC (see Richer 1998a:277 n. 44); (8) kings; (9) exceptional people such as the regent Pausanias, guardian of the king, who fought victoriously against the Persians at Plataea in 479 BC only to fall victim to actions of his compatriots that Delphi judged to be impious, with the result that he was accorded, by way of compensation, honors comparable to those given to Leonidas; (10) a king, Leonidas, who combined in ideal fashion his own charisma, due to the exercise of his royal functions, with the merit of a warrior killed in battle (in observance of an oracle, according to Herodotus 7.220, although the oracle was perhaps *post eventum*).

Figure 15.4 Agamemnon and Cassandra (?). Relief from Chrysapha. Berlin, Staatliche Museum no.731. Based on Tod and Wace 1906:102 fig. 1 (catalog "a")

The protecting dead

Thus the Spartans seem to have accorded a great importance to their dead because they saw them as possible protectors of the living. This way of thinking is illustrated, for example, by some Laconian heroic reliefs from the sixth century, in which tiny figures bring offerings to a much larger seated couple, perhaps Agamemnon and Cassandra (Figure 15.4; Andronikos 1956 identified the people represented as Hades and Demeter, Stibbe 1978 as Dionysus and Demeter, whereas Salapata 1993 believes that the couple originally represented in this sort of configuration must have been Agamemnon and Alexandra/Cassandra).

Furthermore, Pausanias tells of the stele at Sparta inscribed with the names and patronymics of the warriors who fell at Thermopylae (3.14.1). Such a list must have made it possible to evocate the dead (for a similar practice at Plataea see Plutarch, *Aristides* 21.5). Since the Lacedaemonian kings, when dead, were honored not as men but as heroes, according to Xenophon (*Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 15.9), to read out a list of kings of Sparta was to invoke heroes to secure the city's prosperity. This particular status of the kings could help to explain why the royal role survived at Sparta up until the death of Nabis in 192 BC. Religious life and political life, which moderns distinguish, were, accordingly, tightly associated in Sparta.

Conclusion

The Spartan religious system thus seems to have consisted of quite a coherent complex, open to innovations (insofar as deities foreign to the city could be invoked on the battlefield, and the dead could be promoted as supernatural protectors). The importance of religious preoccupations in Spartan life can be seen not only in the performance of rituals, but also in the geography of monuments and cult objects, which shows the extent to which the Spartans were anxious to receive the beneficent protection of supernatural beings. The great awe the Spartans displayed towards their gods seems to have been a motor of their history.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

We have rich and reliable literary sources for Sparta, less so, admittedly, than for Athens, but more so than for countless other cities. These are, in the first instance, the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, and some of the works of Xenophon. Among these last, the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* is very detailed, and one should turn to Rebenich 1998 and Lipka 2002 to appreciate its richness. The third book of Pausanias' *Periegesis*, on Laconia, is an essential text; three editions of it with commentary are most useful: Frazer 1913, Papachatzis 1976 (copiously illustrated), and Musti and Torelli 1991; to these should be added the illustrated itinerary of Xanthakis and Papapostolou 2002.

The Spartan pantheon was extremely rich, and we have been able to make mention only of a small part of it, but very full testimonia can be found in the catalog of evidence assembled in Wide 1893, a fundamental work of reference. Wide's testimonia can be supplemented by consulting the index of Kolbe 1913, and this can be brought up to date with the help of the successive installments of *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. In the epigraphic field, Hupfloher 2000 is devoted specifically to the priesthoods of the Roman period. To access the iconographic evidence, which sheds valuable light on Spartan religion, one may turn to Tod and Wace 1906, Steinhauer ca. 1972, Fitzhardinge 1980, Pipili 1987, and the numerous works of Stibbe: 1969, 1972, 1978, 1989, 1992, 1993, 1996, 2004.

On the territory of Sparta in general, see Cartledge 1998. For matters of the archaeology and topography of Sparta one should turn to specific studies: Dawkins 1929 on the sanctuary of Orthia, Faustoferri 1996 on that of Amyclaean Apollo, with Catling and Cavanagh 1976 and Catling 1992 on the Menelaion. Kourinou 2000 offers a valuable synthesis (with an English summary at 275–86). Records of the investigations of the Fifth *Ephoreia* of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (which undertakes many rescue digs in the modern town of Sparta) appear in *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* (under the authorship of S. Raftopoulou, A. Themos and E. Zavvou in the 1994–8 volumes of the journal). For plans of Sparta on which the principal sanctuaries can be located, see Wace 1906–7: plate i, reproduced at Papachatzis 1976:341, Stibbe 1989:67 (the plan is reproduced without identification of the monuments at Stibbe 1996:21), Musti and Torelli 1991:l–li, Cartledge 1998:41, and Richer 2002:174–5.

On religion in particular some specialist studies may be profitably consulted: Pettersson 1992 on the gods, and Salapata 1993 on heroes (Agamemnon and Cassandra in particular). Parker 1989 offers a synthesis.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Religious System at Alexandria

Françoise Dunand

At the end of antiquity Alexandria's religious system must have resembled a "palimpsest," to use Haas' fortunate metaphor, on which the cults imported at various points by each of the communities that made up the city's urban mosaic were superimposed (Haas 1997). But this diversity of cults probably existed from the city's origin. In this respect, Alexandria probably differed hardly at all from the majority of Greek cities in the hellenistic period. But what distinguished the city from the rest was the fact that its status was ambiguous, since it was created practically *ex nihilo* by royal initiative. Was it a Greek city, invented for Greeks, "on the edge" of Egypt, as in the famous expression *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*? This conceptualization, which has long flourished, is now being called into question. It is true that the city seems to have conformed to the quadrilateral "Hippodamian" plan that was typical of the great hellenistic cities, and that it was centered around the agora and the royal palaces. But the city's structure also comprised numerous elements borrowed from Egypt, as has been demonstrated by the recent discoveries of pharaonic statues and bas-reliefs in the waters of the harbors (Empereur 1998–2002; Goddio 1998). These derived largely from Heliopolis, and they were obviously reused to give Alexandria an Egyptian color. Furthermore, if the city was initially conceived as the seat of a foreign power imposed upon Egypt, the new masters soon demonstrated their integration into the Egyptian system, be this by contributing to the performance of traditional cults or by having themselves crowned "in the Egyptian fashion" at Memphis (as became normal from Ptolemy IV, r. 222–205 BC). From the third century BC, many Egyptians were reaching the corridors of power and being included in the royal entourage, whilst people of Greek descent were sometimes taking on Egyptian names and holding the top priestly jobs in Egyptian temples (Clarysse 1999). In short, Alexandria was of course home to a "mixed" population. Was the site on which it was founded inhabited beforehand? The issue is in dispute. The name Rhakōtis is traditionally regarded as that of the "Egyptian village" that had preceded the city, but it has recently been reinterpreted as a general term designating a building site. So we

could be dealing with a somewhat ironic name adopted by the Egyptians to designate the capital under construction (Chauveau 1997).

Sources

Sources constitute a basic problem for the historian who wants to learn how Alexandria worked, even though it was probably one of the most economically and culturally important cities of the ancient world for several centuries. These are primarily textual. The most important, and the most detailed, is Strabo's description. He tells of the advantages of the site and the circumstances of the foundation before going on to list the principal monuments to be found, from the Necropolis in the west to the poor district of Nicopolis in the east (C790–8). In the course of this he mentions several temples: that of Poseidon, above the "closed port," and in the same quarter the Sebasteion or Kaisareion, built by Cleopatra VII (r. 51–30 BC); the temple of Sarapis, in the "native" quarter, to the southwest of the city; the Paneion on an artificial hill in the Gymnasium quarter. But Strabo also notes that "other, more ancient, sacred precincts are today [ca. 27/26 BC, the presumed date of his voyage to Egypt] all but abandoned."

Other evidence for the city's religious buildings derives from later sources. Papyri mention the presence of a temple of Hermes, founded by Cleopatra VII, and a temple of Hephaestus (Bernand 1996). Arrian records that Alexander had founded sanctuaries "of the Greek gods and the Egyptian Isis" in Alexandria (*Anabasis* 3.1.5). According to the anonymous author of the *Expositio totius mundi*, one could still see in the city, even in his age (ca. AD 350) "all sorts of sacred sanctuaries and magnificently decorated temples." The *Notitia Urbis Alexandrinae* for its part lists no fewer than 2,478 temples, situated throughout the Gamma and Delta quarters of the city (Haas 1997). There were probably a great many small private chapels in this number. Literary texts touch upon religious life from time to time, as, for example, in the case of Callixenus of Rhodes' description of the Ptolemaia celebrated by Philadelphus (Athenaeus 197c–203b; Rice 1983), or as in Theocritus' evocation of the festival in honor of Adonis (*Idylls* 15).

Inscriptions, which are very numerous, consist for the most part of dedications addressed to different gods by individuals or associations. They may mention the erection of a statue, the dedication of a plot of a land, or the construction or restoration of a religious building, in whole or in part (Fraser 1972:1.194–285; Kayser 1994). The evidence of papyrus documents is much more limited: the ground of the inhabited areas of the city, from which one could have had some chance of recovering papyrus, has been completely churned in the course of time, and in any case Alexandria's humid climate hardly favored its preservation. However some interesting evidence does survive, such as references to festivals, particularly in documents from the third century BC, for example those from the Zenon Archive, or the *Dikaiomata* of *P.Hal.* 1, an important collection of legislative and juridical texts.

Archaeology provides another important source of information. Unfortunately, the investigation of the city has always been made difficult by the accumulation of successive levels of habitation, entailing the destruction of ancient structures (Bagnall and Rathbone 2004). Some monuments of which the existence is certain cannot even

be identified; this is the case with most of the temples. The great temple of Sarapis, the prestige of which was immense until its destruction at the end of the fourth century AD, has left only the most meager traces (McKenzie 2004; Rowe 1946). On the other hand, the cemeteries, which have been quite systematically excavated since the end of the nineteenth century, have provided a great deal of evidence, not only about funerary practices, but about industry and the economy (Adriani 1936, 1940, 1952; Breccia 1912; Empereur and Nenna 2003). Lively images of religious life in the hellenistic and Roman periods are offered by the rich iconographic material in the Alexandrian museums: stelae, statues, and terracotta and bronze figurines.

An Overview

At Alexandria, as elsewhere, the establishment of each cult had to correspond at the outset with the presence of a community of worshipers. But it cannot be said that a cult remained the exclusive property of the community that gave it birth. Over the course of time religious "clienteles" diversified. In a polytheistic system, where no religion claims a "truth" greater than that of the others, it is permissible for individuals to respect and place their trust in various gods, without for a moment renouncing their first allegiance. From the Ptolemaic era onwards there are many examples from the *chōra* of acts of devotion by Greeks (or in any case people who defined themselves as such) towards Egyptian gods in their most traditional form. There is no reason to think that things happened differently in Alexandria.

At the foundation of the city the first immigrants must have brought their cults with them. Soldiers stationed at Schedia at the end of the fourth century BC made a dedication to Athena Polias; dedications to Apollo, to Artemis (*OGIS* 18) and to Zeus (*OGIS* 65) date from the first half of the third century. The cult of Zeus was well established under Ptolemy III: two priests were attached to him and he had a sacred precinct (*temenos*) and altars. A statue of Zeus Soter was placed on the top of Pharos. The *politeuma* of soldiers of Alexandria made a dedication to him towards the end of the first century BC (*SEG* 20.499). The Dioscuri were there too, something not at all surprising in a city to which maritime activity was important. The members of a religious association devoted to their cult (Dioskouriastai) made a dedication to them that associated them with the royal couple, Ptolemy III (r. 246–222 BC) and Berenice. Members of the dynastic cult (Synbasilistai) made another dedication to them (*BSAA* 42, 34).

Demeter

These isolated documents cannot testify to the existence of established and enduring cults (except in the case of Zeus). However, three Greek deities benefited from a privileged position at Alexandria. The first is Demeter. The foundation of her temple, the Thesmophorion, has to go back at least to the time of Philadelphus; her festivals, the Dēmētria and the Thesmophoria, are mentioned in the Zenon Archive (*P.Cair. Zen.* 59028; *P.Col. Zen.* 19). Terracotta figurines representing young women carrying cult objects, amongst them a piglet, may represent a ritual of the Thesmophoria: the

pig played no part in the food offerings made to Egyptian gods. It was into the Thesmophorion that Oenanthe, the mother of Ptolemy IV's favorite Agathocles, fled to escape violence in the troubles that followed the king's death. This did not stop her being lynched by the mob along with the rest of her family (Polybius 15.27, 29, 33). It has been supposed that the Mysteries of Demeter and Kore could have been celebrated at Alexandria, because one of Alexandria's quarters was called Eleusis, and because the Eumolpid Timotheus took the role of religious advisor to Ptolemy I. This cannot be proven, but the Eleusinian legend was clearly widespread in Egypt in the hellenistic period. Frescoes recently discovered in the Kom esh-Shugafa "catacomb" show, in two parallel registers, (1) the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys lamenting for the dead Osiris and (2) the rape of Persephone by Hades: two images of death and rebirth that clearly exhibit the coexistence (and not the fusion) of the cultures (Empereur 1998). The "Tazza Farnese," a most beautiful cameo made in Alexandria towards the end of the second century, or perhaps at the very start of the first century BC, represents the king in the guise of Triptolemus, resting on the handle of a plow and accompanied by a Demeter-Isis who is queen both of the Nile and of the seasons, figures symbolic of the fertility of the ground and the abundance of crops. Imperial coins from Alexandria often portray Triptolemus in his chariot, snakes in harness, an image well known from Greek vase painting. But it is clear that, despite Diodorus' claims (1.29), the Mysteries of Demeter did not originate in Egypt.

Dionysus

More important still was the place reserved for Dionysus. From the beginnings of the Ptolemaic dynasty there was a direct relationship between the god and the king. The Adoulis inscription from the reign of Ptolemy III claims Dionysus, alongside Heracles, as an ancestor of the Lagid family (*OGIS* 54). The Lagid kings, down to Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (r. 80–51 BC), had themselves portrayed by turns with the attributes of the god and consciously sought his patronage, not least because Alexander himself had chosen him as a model.

Ptolemy IV seems to have had a particularly strong relationship with Dionysus. He founded a festival in his honor in which he participated himself, sporting an ivy-leaf tattoo and carrying a tympanum (Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 33–6). He also founded a society of drinkers, *sympotai*, who probably made up a Dionysiac thiasos (Athenaeus 276a–c). Further, a *prostagma* dating from Ptolemy IV's reign requires all those celebrating Dionysiac rites to come and register themselves in Alexandria, where their sacred books (*hieros logos*) are to be examined (*BGU* 1211). This measure perhaps expresses the desire of the throne to control the doctrine and particularly the rituals it favored, because had a significant potential to be subversive. The ideal of *tryphē* embodied by Dionysus seems, furthermore, to have constituted one of the central themes of Lagid ideology and propaganda: *tryphē* in its positive aspect is abundance, the prosperity that the Lagid king is supposed to dispense to his subjects, the symbol of which is the cornucopia, the favorite attribute of the queens (Heinen 1978).

Callixenus' description of the Dionysiac procession organized in the Alexandrian stadium in the context of the Ptolemaia of 274 or 270 BC illustrates the prevalence of

the god's images and their familiarity to the Alexandrians (Dunand 1981). One chariot carried his monumental statue, others paintings of episodes from Dionysus' mythology: Semele's love affair, the little god's childhood in the grotto of the nymphs, his triumphant return from India. Dionysus' clergy took part in the procession, a priest at their head, the poet Philiscus. There were also groups of men dressed as sileni and satyrs, their bodies painted purple and red, and groups of women dressed as maenads, their hair loose, garlanded with leaves and snakes: a simple charade, or the ritual costumes of cultic associations dedicated to Dionysus? The most important and the most ancient of these associations was that of the dramatic artists, the Technitai, whose existence at Oxyrhynchus is still attested at the end of the third century AD.

Aphrodite

A third Greek deity, Aphrodite, enjoyed prominence in Alexandria, probably owing to the patronage of the Lagid queens. Since she was associated with Arsinoe II, Aphrodite must have had several temples in Alexandria and the surrounding area. One, on Cape Zephyrion between Alexandria and Canopus, was dedicated to Arsinoe Aphrodite Zephyritis. A remarkable statue has recently been discovered in the course of the underwater excavations in the Canopus–Heraklion area, and can be seen in the new Library of Alexandria Museum. It portrays the goddess's birth as she rises from the waters, with her wet drapery revealing the elegant shape of her body. The festivals commemorating the annual return of Adonis were celebrated at Alexandria on the initiative of Arsinoe II. The women of Alexandria went to the palace to view the pictures of Aphrodite and Adonis set out on an extraordinarily luxurious couch, surrounded by flowers and the ephemeral pots of plants known as the "gardens of Adonis." On the final day of the festival the women went at dawn to the seashore, where they performed a ritual of mourning to mark Adonis' departure as he returned to the underworld, and to mark the grief of the goddess (Theocritus, *Idylls* 15.96–144). We know from a fragment of Callixenus (Athenaeus 203e–206c; Rice 1983:196) that there was a circular temple (*tholoeidēs*) dedicated to Aphrodite on the sumptuous boat that Ptolemy IV built himself for cruising on the Nile. Inside was a marble statue of the goddess. The cult was still favored by the royal family in the second and first centuries BC: a temple was dedicated to Aphrodite Hathor at Philae by Ptolemy VIII and the two Cleopatras (*OGIS* 142). Cleopatra VII, in her turn, took on the guise of the goddess when she staged her meeting with Mark Antony at Tarsus (Plutarch, *Antony* 26–7).

Evidence for private devotion to Aphrodite is rarer. However, a dedication from the middle of the third century BC to Sarapis Dionysos and Isis Aphrodite, originating in Alexandria, has been discovered at Abu el-Matamir (near lake Mariut; *SB* 5863), and in the second century BC there was a cult association dedicated to the goddess at Alexandria. Furthermore, her image was widespread in the form of statuettes modeled on fine statuary and in molded terracotta figurines (examples are very numerous), which remained extremely popular until the Roman period (Dunand 1990). All these images must have belonged to the decoration of Alexandrian houses. A statuette of Aphrodite is often mentioned in legal papyri as forming part of a young woman's dowry (Burkhalter 1990).

Isis

Aphrodite is often assimilated to the Egyptian goddesses Hathor or Isis. The latter played a fundamental role in the religious life of Alexandria. It is quite plausible that her temple was founded by Alexander. At this point, Isis was already known to the Greeks: it is in 333/2 BC, the very year of Alexandria's foundation, that her temple in the Piraeus is first mentioned, in a decree of the Athenian council (Vidman 1969:1). And, notably, her cult had expanded considerably in Egypt in the first millennium BC (Dunand 2000). Herodotus was right to state that "all Egyptians worship them [Isis and Osiris]" (2.42). Isis had several temples in Alexandria, one on Cape Lochias, another on the Pharos island, and she certainly had a cult space inside the great temple of Sarapis. Several coastal towns close to Alexandria, also had temples dedicated to her, notably Menuthis, near Canopus, where her cult is attested until a very late period (fifth century AD). The little Isiac sanctuary at Ras el-Soda, to the east of Alexandria, was built in the second century AD by a rich individual, one Isidorus. Injured in a chariot accident, he dedicated this temple to thank the goddess for healing him. The monumental statue discovered there represents one of the most typical images of Alexandrian Isis, treated in the most classical "Greco-Roman" styles.

What was actually new about the Isiac cult, as it functioned at Alexandria, was that it was expressed through imagery quite different to that which the Egyptian tradition had developed. It was not just her figurative image that changed; so did, in part at least, the mental image of her. The traditional representation of her continued to thrive in the great temples built in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Philae, Dendera, and Kalabsha. But new images appeared, probably developed in an Alexandrian context. The goddess began to sport a very specific hairstyle and clothing, which henceforth would constitute her identifying characteristics, and those too of he devotees: neck-length hair in ringlets and a fringed cloak tied over the chest. She was also given new attributes, the cornucopia and the *situla*, a small jar of milk with a pointed base. Terracotta figurines, found in large numbers in Alexandria and in the *chōra*, display the goddess in varying forms that often reinterpret ancient models, as in the case of the motif of Isis suckling Harpocrates. It is more surprising to find a nude image of Isis, identifiable by her crown with horns and disk atop a large pile of flowers and leaves. Nudity was excluded from the traditional representation of goddesses in Egypt (Dunand 1990). A completely new aspect is that of "Lady of the Sea," protectress of sailors. These images accordingly represent Isis resting on a rudder and holding the cornucopia that is the attribute of Tychē. On intaglios and coins she is shown standing opposite the Alexandrian Pharos. These images were probably developed outside priestly control, which was focused on temple decoration. The terracotta figurines, whether they represent Egyptian gods or Greek ones, were made in the same workshops that manufactured common crockery (Mysliwiec 1996); they are hardly ever found in temple contexts, but rather in houses (or tombs). These were the devotional objects one kept with oneself.

Do the new images of Isis represent a "hellenization" of the goddess? The concept hardly seems to be applicable (Dunand 1999, 2000). Some of the images express well-known and ancient aspects of the goddess but conform with new modes of representation. Others attribute to her aspects that were not formerly hers. All these

coexisted, but we cannot know for which clientele they were destined. The frequency of a motif allows us at best to estimate the "popularity" of this or that aspect of the goddess. Isis Aphrodite, the nude goddess, and the "divine mother" Isis, suckling Harpocrates, are particularly widespread, and perhaps reflect the preferences of a female clientele.

Sarapis

However, the god that came to embody Alexandria and even, in the eyes of the Greeks, Egyptian religion as a whole, was paradoxically a parvenu, an artificial creation, Sarapis. The couple he formed with Isis came to supplant (except in the funerary domain) the ancient couple of Osiris–Isis.

The "creation" of Sarapis is one of the most surprising episodes in the religious history of Alexandria. The date and the circumstances of his creation remain controversial. Relatively late traditions mention the existence of a sanctuary of the god on the site where, in the due course, the city was to be founded. Others tell that Alexander decided to have the architect Parmenion build a temple for him. However, the oldest tradition and the best established one, transmitted by Plutarch, amongst others, refers to a dream experienced by Ptolemy I (r. 323–282 BC), in the course of which there appeared to him the colossal statue of a god he did not recognize. The god told him that he lived at Sinope, a Greek colony on the Black Sea, and commanded him to bring his statue to Alexandria. Accordingly, the king sent to find the statue. Once it had arrived in Alexandria, the king's advisors, the Eumolpid Timotheus and Manetho of Sebennytos, identified it as representing the god Pluto and asserted that he was none other than Sarapis, which was "the Egyptian name for Pluto" (Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 361f–362e). As it stands, this narrative presents a number of implausibilities. The theme of a dream apparition is a cliché found in various accounts of this type: there was no better means of affirming the importance and legitimacy of a cult than to attribute its foundation to the clearly expressed will of a god. The motif of a statue brought from a foreign sanctuary – in this case a Greek city – is equally quite common; it could serve to justify the fact that the images of the new god were completely Greek. But it is clear that this god was fundamentally of Egyptian origin. His name is already found in the form Osorapis or Oserapis in Greek documents prior to Alexander's conquest, such as the "curse of Artemisia," a text of the fourth century BC in which a woman invokes "Oserapis and the gods who sit with him" against her husband who has wronged her (*UPZ* i.1). This god was none other than the dead Apis, become an "Osiris," as did every dead person in receipt of funerary rites. He had a cult at Memphis where he took the form of a man with a bull's head (Fazzini 1988:9).

It seems, therefore, that Ptolemy I and his advisors appropriated a Memphite god to make him the protector of the new city. But they also wanted to give this god Greek characteristics: Sarapis is represented as a bearded old man with abundant curly hair and a nude torso, or alternatively dressed in the Greek fashion with *chitōn* and *himation*. He leans on a long staff and rests his right hand on the three-headed dog Cerberus, who sits beside him (Hornbostel 1973). This image, of which many examples survive in diverse formats and media, was held to be modeled on a

monumental statue by Bryaxis. Cerberus' presence shows Sarapis' funerary character clearly: he is largely comparable to a Hades–Pluto. But he is also (like Osiris) a god of agrarian fertility, as is indicated by the grain measure, the *kalathos*, that constitutes his unique crown. He is also a healing god, whose image partly recalls that of Asclepius. Very early on, his sanctuary at Canopus became a famous healing center, where the god accomplished miraculous cures. The philosopher Demetrius of Phaleron, who came to the court of Ptolemy I, is held to have been cured of his blindness there (Diogenes Laertius 5.76). In addition, Sarapis quickly became a dynastic god, associated with Isis, and protector of royalty. The formula of the oath that features in official documents, in Demotic as in Greek, regularly associates the divine pair with the sovereign couple, from the reign of Ptolemy III. Numerous dedications, official and private, were offered to them jointly.

The great temple built in Sarapis' honor by Ptolemy III on the hill called "Rhakotis," from which the foundation tablets have been found, must have replaced an older temple, perhaps a more modest one. It is very difficult to form an idea of it. It was repeatedly rebuilt until the Roman period, and the whole site has been completely churned up. It was probably a Greek-style temple with a triangular pediment supported by four columns, as depicted on coins. But a lotus-type capital found *in situ* shows that it may have contained Egyptian-style elements. We know, besides, that a large circuit wall surrounded the sacred precinct, which included various buildings, amongst them a small temple dedicated to Harpocrates. Two long subterranean galleries in the base of the hill are perhaps to be identified as a cemetery for sacred dogs. A dedication to Hermanubis was found there, the god who conducts the souls of the dead. Rufinus of Aquileia's description of the destruction of the Sarapieion in AD 392 mentions numerous buildings, exedras, *pastophoria*, and groups of dwellings in which the priests lived. He emphasizes the magnificence of the temple, the interior walls of which were lined with precious metals while the exterior was "sumptuously and magnificently built in marble" (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.23).

Other temples were dedicated to Sarapis, such as the "Sarapieion of Parmeniscos" mentioned in a papyrus from the Zenon Archive (*P.Cair.Zen.* 59355). Is this a reference to the temple attributed to Parmenion, Alexander's architect? Beyond this, private sanctuaries, in which he was generally associated with Isis, were built in his honor by the citizens of Alexandria: a *temenos* was offered to Sarapis and Isis by Archagathos, governor of Libya, and his wife Stratonice, under Ptolemy II (*SEG* 18. 636). A sanctuary, *naos*, with its circuit wall, *peribolos*, was dedicated to the pair by an Alexandrian and his wife during the reign of Ptolemy III (*OGIS* 64). A little later, another temple, the foundation tablets of which were found in the last century, was dedicated to the same divine couple, associated with the king Ptolemy IV and his wife Arsinoe III (Rowe 1946:12–13).

It is not very likely that the creation of Sarapis derived from a Lagid desire to promote a "fusion" of Greek and Egyptian populations around a "syncretistic" god. Everything indicates, on the contrary, that they tried hard to maintain a status apart for the Greeks (with, in particular, fiscal privileges). Sarapis must, rather, have performed the function of a city god: in Greek tradition, every city foundation was accompanied by the foundation of a cult. Indeed his cult seems to have been initially confined to a Greek context, or even to a court context. It was in the Roman period that it underwent considerable expansion, with cult sites throughout the country. But

it is possible that, in some contexts, the cult was always considered "foreign." An anti-Greek propaganda text, composed probably in the second century BC, but recopied in the Roman period, *The Oracle of the Potter* (*P.Graf* G 29787, *P.Rain.* G 19813, *P.Oxy.* 2332; Dunand 1977), stigmatizes the "city by the sea" (Alexandria) which has "made gods from new metal" (the cult statue of Sarapis was thought to be made from all sorts of precious metals and stones): since Alexandria has made a divine image "that is peculiar to herself," the ancient gods will turn away from her.

Dynastic Cult

In the Alexandrian religious system the cult offered to the royal family occupied a special place. More even than in the case of Sarapis, it was a reflex of objectives that were above all political. The first act was the foundation by Ptolemy I of the cult of Alexander, with an eponymous priest, probably between 305 and 290 BC. Then, in 272 BC, came the foundation of the cult of the Theoi Adelphoi, Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, probably associated with that of Alexander. Next, in 270, came the foundation of a cult especially dedicated to Arsinoe, with an eponymous priestess, the canephore. From the reign of Ptolemy III, the living kings were regularly associated with their dead ancestors in a cult that could henceforth be termed "dynastic," especially since, soon, under Ptolemy V (r. 204–180 BC), the Ptolemy I–Berenice couple was introduced into the protocol. The cult continued to grow as new "king-gods" succeeded. The queens were not left behind. New priesthoods were instituted for Berenice II and then for Arsinoe III. Cleopatra III distinguished herself in this field by founding, ca. 116 BC, a cult addressed to her under the name "Cleopatra Philometor Soteria Dikaiosyne Nikephoros," with three priestesses, a *stephanēphoros*, and a *phōsphoros* (Fraser 1972:1.221). She it was too that instituted for herself the *hieros pōlos*, literally "Sacred Foal," a sacerdotal or para-sacerdotal office apparently related to the cult of Demeter. But the institution of the *hieros pōlos* disappeared on the death of Cleopatra III in 102 BC. One could of course relate this desire to multiply these cults, and therefore the honors rendered to a ruler, to the rivalries and conflicts of interest at the heart of the Lagid family in the course of the second century BC, all the while asking oneself about the effectiveness of such measures.

The dynastic cult is manifestly, in the first instance, a Greek custom. From the end of the fourth century, the Greeks had arrived in Egypt in great numbers, from all corners of the Greek world, and they constituted an important but very diverse group. The cult of the sovereign was probably held to play a unifying role. The holders of the eponymous priesthoods, in the third century BC, were men and women drawn from royal entourage, ambassadors, admirals, high functionaries, as well as their wives or daughters. In the second century BC some kings, such as Ptolemy IX (r. 116–107, 88–80 BC) or Ptolemy X (r. 107–88 BC) took on this role themselves. The official initiative could be supported by private initiatives. Cult associations, *basilistai* or *philobasilistai*, often recruited from among soldiers or veterans, were devoted to the worship of the sovereigns. In Alexandria itself individuals made dedications to the royal couple, sometimes in association with various gods, chiefly Sarapis and Isis. They would also build private chapels in their

honor. Several streets in Alexandria bore the name of Arsinoe II accompanied by a cult epithet (Arsinoe Basileia, Eleēmōn, Teleia, Chalkioikos, Karpophoros, Nikē, Sōzousa . . .). They were probably so designated (up until the Roman period) because of the presence of a small sanctuary dedicated to the divinized queen (Fraser 1972:1.237). But we know practically nothing about the places in which the royal cult was officially celebrated, nor about the nature of the ceremonies. Ptolemy IV had built a new *Sēma* in the center of the city designed to replace that of Ptolemy I, a monument which incorporated, besides the tombs of Alexander and the first Lagids, a space intended for cult use. It has yet to be found. The cult ceremonies were probably of the Greek type, with sacrifices and processions. An Alexandrian decree about the cult of Arsinoe prescribes that the inhabitants should sacrifice "in front of their house, or on their roof, or in the street along which the canephore passes." They could sacrifice "whatever they wanted," with the exception of a billy-goat or a nanny-goat (*P.Oxy.* 2465, 2.1).

It is difficult to estimate the religious significance of the dynastic cult. The desire to see a god embody himself in living form is undoubtedly one of the new characteristics of religious life in the hellenistic age. We need only think of the Athenians invoking Demetrius Poliorcetes, "We see you, you are not made from wood or stone, you are real . . . " (anonymous ithyphallic hymn at *FGrH* 76 fr. 13). In this sense the king could easily appear, according to the formula of the *enteuxeis* (the complaints and requests addressed to the kings of Egypt) as the "common savior of all." But we also know that the Alexandrians failed neither to criticize their rulers nor to adorn them with insulting nicknames. When the imperial cult was installed at Alexandria in the age of Augustus, the temple built by Cleopatra VII being transformed into the Kaisareion, it was modeled on the royal Ptolemaic cult and had, as the Ptolemaic cult had done, an overtly political purpose. But it is even more difficult to estimate the impact of that cult, the documents bearing upon it being few (Heinen 1995).

In the Ptolemaic era, in parallel with the Greek-style dynastic cult, an Egyptian-style royal cult was also celebrated. This was associated in the principal temples with that of the local gods. This cult was already in place for the benefit of Arsinoe II and became generalized thereafter. Various decrees of the synods, from Ptolemy III to Ptolemy V, prescribe that honors should be paid to the kings in each temple of the land (Clarysse 1999). The kings themselves are, furthermore, often depicted on Egyptian temple reliefs, where they are shown exercising their cultic function, in the image of their predecessors. This fiction endured into the Roman period, to the profit of the emperors, the new pharaohs.

Jews and Christians

The Alexandrian religious system was characterized by the coexistence of divine images and cultic practices, and this system even succeeded in incorporating, for several centuries, monotheistic religions. Alexandria was home to an important Jewish community, from at least the period of Ptolemy I. Protected by the Lagids, its members do not appear to have encountered difficulties in the practice of their religion (Mélèze-Modrzejewski 1981). The translation of the Pentateuch into Greek, probably realized in the course of the second century BC, perhaps shows the kings'

interest in the "Laws of the Jews." At any rate, it reflects a certain degree of hellenization, at least at the cultural level, among the Jewish communities, of which the most striking representative is the philosopher Philo (early first century AD). Although violent conflicts broke out in Alexandria between the "Greeks" and the Jews in the course of the first century AD, the causes of these were not religious, but political and juridical: the Jews of Alexandria, demoted by imperial law into the inferior class of the Aegyptii, sought to recover a more favorable status. However, Trajan's harsh suppression of a revolt after two years of armed conflict (AD 115–17) put an end to the Jewish presence in Alexandria and Egypt for almost two centuries.

We know practically nothing of the circumstances in which Christian communities became implanted in Alexandria and recruited members. The existence at the end of the second century AD of a catechesis school distinguished by great theologians (Pantenus, Clement, Origen) leads to the supposition that there was already an important community in the city. But it was primarily in the third century AD that Christianity took off (in Alexandria more than the *chōra*) and that the ecclesiastical structures were put in place. The edicts of Diocletian forbidding the practice of Christianity delivered a severe blow to it. However, owing to the tolerant measures of Constantine, and above all to the ever more favorable policies of the emperors towards Christians, Christianity was destined to become the dominant religion in the second half of the fourth century (Bagnall 1993; Frankfurter 1998). It was the dominant religion, but a troubled one. In the third century and especially in the fourth, the Christians of Alexandria were riven by doctrinal conflicts, by the Melitian schism and by the Arian "heresy." In the context of these conflicts, the traditional cults, Greek and Egyptian, were completely lost. Even if the significance of the event may have been exaggerated, the destruction of the great Sarapieion by the "commandos" of bishop Theophilus in AD 392 marks the disappearance of the extraordinary melting-pot of religions that Alexandria had represented.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

The fundamental work on the religious system of Alexandria remains the chapter devoted to it in Fraser 1972:1.189–301 and 2.323–461. For the city in general, see Bernand 1996 and Ballet 1999. For the material evidence for Alexandrian religion, see Adriani 1961, Fazzini 1988, and *La gloire d'Alexandrie* 1998, and, for the underwater archaeology in Alexandria's harbors, see Goddio 1998a, 1998b. For terracotta statuettes, see Dunand 1990. For Ptolemaic temples see Clarysse 1999, for their festivals see Dunand 1981, and for the grand procession of Ptolemy II see Rice 1983. For Isis, see Dunand 1999 and 2000; for Sarapis, see Rowe 1946 and Hornbostel 1973; and for the inscriptions from outside Egypt bearing on both, Vidman 1969. For dynastic cult see Heinen 1978 and 1995. For the role of Memphis under the Ptolemies see Thompson 1988. For the Jews of Alexandria see Mélèze-Modrzejewski 1981. For the late antique period, see Bagnall 1993 and Haas 1997.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Religious System in Arcadia

Madeleine Jost

We no longer need to demonstrate the reality of an Arcadian ethnic identity (Jost 2002b; Nielsen 1999, 2002:52–87). But can we speak in the same way of an Arcadian religious system and, if so, in what sense? Did there exist a structure of cults and myths that can be considered distinctive to Arcadia? At first sight the answer is "No": the political structure of the region was based upon its cities, and its religion was based upon their local pantheons. However, from the fourth century onwards the Arcadian people tended to become unified, and one can ask whether, so far as religion was concerned, there was not an Arcadian "culture," a unitary and distinctive way of worshiping the gods and of imagining them. The existence of distinctively Arcadian deities that were worshiped throughout Arcadia will furnish the first part of the answer. The analysis of local pantheons will supply another. Could there also have been an Arcadian mythical world that, whilst appropriating universal themes, generated distinctive tales connected to the land of Arcadia?

Three Pan-Arcadian Deities and their Cults

Few deities distinctive to Arcadia were worshiped throughout the region as a whole. However, the following are sufficiently distinctive to merit attention: Pan, Zeus Lykaios, and, in all probability, Despoina.

When Evander settled at Rome with his Arcadian followers, he began by founding a cult of Pan, "The most ancient and the most worshiped among the gods of the Arcadians" (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.32.3). Pan, born in Arcadia, was, according to Pausanias (8.26.2) an indigenous god (*epichōrios*) for the Arcadians and he was one of the First Gods at Megalopolis (8.31.3). At the time of the creation of the Arcadian League in the fourth century, he was, alongside Zeus Lykaios, the symbol of national unity on the coinage (Jost 1985:184). Beyond Arcadia he had the same reputation: Pindar qualified him as "ruler of Arcadia" (fr. 95 Snell-Maehler) and Lucian also has

the god say "I reign over all Arcadia" (*Dialogues of the Gods* 22.3). Besides, it was in his role as an Arcadian god that the Athenians installed him on the slopes of the Acropolis after the battle of Marathon. He had appeared on Mount Parthenion near Tegea to Philippides, the runner the Athenians had sent to ask the Spartans for help, and he had offered his help the Athenians (Herodotus 6.105).

Although he could intervene in war (Borgeaud 1979:137–56), the god was above all the protector of shepherds and their animals, and so too of hunters, and his appearance symbolized the symbiosis between man and animal. He was half-man and half-goat. From the animal, he took his head, legs, genitals, his little tail, and his hair. From man he borrowed his upright stance, his chest, and his hands. On many votive statuettes the animal elements are accentuated. In addition to these representations there was, from the fifth century onwards, a "humanized" type in which his animality was manifest only in the form of two little horns, and the coinage of the Arcadian League in the fourth century offered the most idealized image of the god. However, it was not until the Roman era that the god abandoned his connection with the animal world (Jost 1987–8:219–24 and plates 28–30, figures 1–12). His animality was considered normal. Rare and late are the authors who, like Lucian (*Dialogues of the Gods* 22.2), feel the need to justify this appearance (Hermes had approached Penelope in the form of a goat). No local *logos* was felt to be necessary to explain this, as was the case for Poseidon Hippios. Thus Pan presented the hybrid form typical of Arcadia. His attributes were the *lagōbolon* (a stick for killing hares), a shepherd's crook, and the syrinx, made from reeds glued together with wax, which he had invented in Arcadia (it was in the Melpeian mountains, as it was told, that "Pan invented the melody of the syrinx": Pausanias 8.38.11).

The god was omnipresent in Arcadia. Instead of living on Olympus, he was present in the places frequented by the shepherds and their flocks, and he moved with them. In the Phigalian *logos* of Demeter Melaina, when the goddess retired into a cave in her anger, Pan took on the role of mediator with Zeus: "Pan, who traversed Arcadia and who hunted now on one mountain and then on another, arrived in due course, we are told, on Mount Elaion. He saw Demeter's condition . . . " (Pausanias 8.42.3). As a shepherd himself, he was *skopiētas*, "he who watches from the mountain-tops" (*Palatine Anthology* 6.109 line 9) and *prokathēgetēs*, "Conductor [of flocks]" (*IG* v.2, 93). He accompanied shepherds in their transhumance.

The locations of Pan's cult in Arcadia were often diffuse, reflecting the mobile character of the god. In addition to his delimited and humble sanctuaries in town and country, entire mountains were sacred to him: thus Mount Lampeia (Pausanias 8.24.4) and Mount Maenalus (Pausanias 8.36.8), where "the locals claim actually to hear Pan playing the syrinx." The Nomian mountains, derived their name, according to Pausanias (8.38.11) "from the pasturages [*nomoi*] of Pan." The frequent occurrence of the god is to be explained by the preponderance in Arcadia of the pastoral economy (Roy 1999:328–36). A series of bronze ex-votos from a sanctuary of Pan near Berekla on the slopes of Lykaion demonstrate that the god's clientele was recruited chiefly from the world of breeders and minor shepherds. Particularly noteworthy are the figurines of shepherds wearing the *pilos* and dressed in heavy cloaks, into which they huddle against the cold (Hübinger 1992, 1993). Pan was not merely a symbol of pastoral life in Arcadia, and tutelary deity of the Arcadian League: he was also considered to be the supreme god of Arcadia, if we may believe

Stephanus of Byzantium's gloss (s.v. *Arkadia*), according to which Pania was an alternative name for Arcadia.

On the right of the Arcadian League coins that display Pan one finds Zeus Lykaios, another symbol of the League (Jost 1985: plate 63, figure 4). He also had a role as a national god in Arcadia. During the expedition of the Ten Thousand, the Arcadians on the campaign celebrated the Lykaia sacrifice at Peltae and set up games (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.2.10). For these soldiers, remote from their home, he was the Arcadian god par excellence. His influence across the Greek world is attested by the lists of victors at the games on Mount Lykaion and by the sanctuaries that Zeus Lykaios was given at Cyrene and in Triphylia (Jost 1985:268–9). But many facets of his cult had a specifically Arcadian character.

Pausanias (8.38.4) gives us a striking description of the rite celebrated at the spring Hagno:

> If there is a prolonged drought, and if the seeds in the soil and the trees wither, then the priest of Zeus Lykaios, after making prayers in the direction of the water and making all the prescribed sacrifices, lowers an oak branch to the surface of the spring, without sending it to the depths. When the water has been agitated, a mist-like vapor rises and soon the vapor becomes a cloud and, drawing other clouds to itself, in this way causes rain to fall on the land of Arcadia.

The ceremony was designed to make rain; it did not take place on a fixed occasion, but was used in case of prolonged drought. It was focused upon the spring Hagno (the prayer is made facing the water) and the nymph Hagno could have been the original addressee. But in the time of Pausanias, it was the priest of Zeus Lykaios who officiated and it was to this god that the ritual was addressed, in his role of being responsible for atmospheric phenomena. We know of prayer-texts to Zeus to make rain, and Zeus' role as "assembler of clouds" goes back to Homer. It is attested by many epithets (Hyetios, "Rainy"; Ombrios, "Producing rain from a storm"). But the recourse to a magical operation to make rain is much more rare and its association with Zeus is unique in Greece (Jost 1985:251–2).

Amongst the "curiosities" of Mount Lykaion, Pausanias mentions an *abaton* of Zeus (8.38.6). This sacred enclosure was off limits to every living being. According to Pausanias, anyone who violated the taboo lost his shadow and died within the year; Plutarch (*Greek Questions* 39) speaks of execution by stoning or exile for offenders. The tradition of the loss of the shadow is found already in Theopompus (*FGrH* 115 fr. 343). This is, it seems, a vivid expression of death (according to Plutarch's observation, "The Pythagoreans say that the souls of the dead cast no shadow"). The punishment of death corresponds with the strength of the interdiction. But this was not exceptional: in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (line 121), when Oedipus mistakenly enters an *abaton* sacred to the Eumenides, the Chorus wants to stone him.

Above the *abaton*, on the summit of Lykaion, the altar received human sacrifices offered to Zeus, according to tradition. Plato alludes to it in his *Republic* (8.565d), where we read that, "if one has tasted morsels of human entrails amongst those of the other victims, one is inevitably transformed into a wolf." And a fragment of Theophrastus preserved by Porphyry (*On Abstinence* 2.27.2) tells that, "Still in our own day in Arcadia, during the Lycaean festival . . . official human sacrifices are

performed in which the whole world participates'' (cf. also Ps.-Plato, *Minos* 315c). Pausanias (8.38.7) is laconic about the sacrifices on Mount Lykaion: the secrecy that surrounded the ceremony in his time would have prevented him from inquiring into the subject of them and he uses a kind of apotropaic formula (''let them be what they always have been'') before passing on to another topic. The embarrassment he exhibits indicates that he has some idea about the sacrifices in question and about their unusual and shocking nature (he expresses his repugnance for human sacrifices at 1.22.6, on the subject of Polyxena). If we leave aside the werewolf stories, described as *muthoi* by Plato, that surrounded the sacrifices on Lykaion, we may inquire into the reality of these human sacrifices, which the ancient sources group amongst barbarian sacrifices, together with those of the Carthaginians.

The reality of these sacrifices had long been agreed upon, despite the negative results of the excavations of K. Kourouniotis (Jost 2002c). But that view is now undergoing revision. There is a general tendency to deny the historicity of almost all human sacrifices mentioned in the texts. The claims of human sacrifice on Mount Lykaion could derive from a confusion between the myth of Lykaon, sacrificer of a child, and the rite itself (Hughes 1991:105–6), or they could even (and this is the most widespread interpretation) reflect a symbolic death in initiation rites for adolescents; the power of suggestion could have supported rumors of a rite of cannibalism (Bonnechere 1994:85–96). In fact, the archaeological argument is not decisive. The outdatedness of the excavation means that new investigations are required. Moreover, the notion of human sacrifice is not wholly divorced from that of the funeral (it can be seen in the case of Polyxena at Euripides, *Hecuba* 605–14), and the remains of the human victims could have been the object of separate treatment, away from the altar. The ''symbolic'' interpretation of the rite is not impossible in itself, but its initiatory character is far from assured. Everything rests on a tendentious interpretation of texts describing someone who has consumed human flesh being transformed into a wolf. The traces of a tribal initiation are sought, but the reality of any such initiation remains to be proven (Jost, forthcoming (b)). To turn the human sacrifices into ''a symbol, an image, a mythical exaggeration'' (as does Bonnechere 1994:314) amounts, in the case of Mount Lykaion, to a denial of the testimonies of Theophrastus and the *Minos* that remain fundamental. But the reality of human sacrifices is too emphatic in these texts to be swept aside *a priori*. It is better to leave the question open. The persistence of the tradition and (why not?) the fact of human sacrifices in any case would suit the wild character of Lykaion's landscape well.

Whatever interpretation is to be retained, the idea that Zeus demanded human sacrifices is not incompatible with the image of an Arcadian federal god. Zeus was a wild god (*abaton*, sacrifice), a god of countrymen to whom the weather matters, but also a god of national unity, who brought the Arcadians together at the time of panhellenic games.

A third original Arcadian deity, Despoina, the ''Mistress,'' certainly had a pan-Arcadian audience. ''There is no deity that the Arcadians venerate more than this Despoina'' writes Pausanias (8.37.9). Since we know that the cult at Lykosoura was the only one she received in Arcadia, we must infer that this city's sanctuary was honored by all the Arcadians. When they refused to move to populate Megalopolis, the inhabitants of Lykosoura were forgiven for this by the Arcadians, not only because of the sanctuary's right of asylum, but also because the cult it housed

(8.27.6) was known to all the Arcadians and its reputation surpassed that of the city of Lykosoura itself. Furthermore, when he describes the sanctuary, Pausanias does not make reference to the inhabitants of Lykosoura in the way in which he usually records local practices and traditions, but rather just to the "Arcadians." It is the Arcadians who "bring to the sanctuary the produce of their cultivated trees" (8.37.7) and "who celebrate rites of initiation and sacrifice to Despoina" (8.37.8), and "the legend of Anytos is Arcadian" (8.37.6). It should also be noted that the grandeur of the sanctuary's architectural program and the presence in it of a monumental cult-statue group sculpted by Damophon of Messene are out of all proportion to the modest importance of Lykosoura alone. We must accept the probability that Despoina's sanctuary was a pan-Arcadian one.

The deity worshiped, Despoina, was the daughter of Demeter, like Kore, and Eleusinian symbols can be seen in the attributes that the goddess' cult statue held (8.37.4), the torch and the box (*kistē*), but the goddess' personality was very different. By her side in the cult group was not just Demeter: Anytos, a strictly Arcadian character, foster-father of Despoina and armed *propolos* of Demeter, was there too, as was the wild Artemis. The presence of this last goddess, presented as another daughter of Demeter, is to be explained by the affinities she shares with Despoina. Both goddesses are connected with the animal world. In the Lykosoura cult group Artemis was represented as a huntress. As to Despoina, her relationship with the animal world must have been revealed in the course of the mysteries. A series of votive terracotta figurines found in the Megaron represents standing figures, dressed in cloaks (*himatia*), the heads of which are those of rams or cows. They carry baskets on their heads. These figurines are usually interpreted as representations of devotees undertaking the role of sacred basket-carrier (*kanēphoria*) in a procession during which they wore animal masks (Jost 1985:331–7, 2002a:158–9, figs 6.4, 6.5).

Other sculpted figures that decorate the hem of Despoina's dress should be compared. There are some fifteen characters, whose heads and, in many cases, extremities belong to the animal world, but who are dressed and who bear themselves like humans. Some play music, whilst others dance: a fox(?) plays the double *aulos* and a horse plays the *trigōnon*(?); we then have an equid on the *kithara*, and a horse blows into a double *aulos*. The other characters, two pigs, three rams, and an ass, dance along. We must be dealing with humans, no doubt initiates, disguised as animals: they wear masks and their arms and legs are covered with or extended with animal feet. Many of them display a whirling movement, which is expressed by the twisting of the body, the head turned back. The animated dance that the masked figures perform shows that we are in an orgiastic context (Jost 2002a:157–64 and figs 6.7, 6.8).

The rites we glimpse suggest that they belong to the mysteries of a deity of animals, a deity associated not with one particular animal, like Artemis at Brauron, but one that protects diverse domestic species (domestic apart from the fox[?], their predator). The bulls, the rams, and the pigs are linked with the idea of fertility; the presence of equids recalls the fact that Despoina was born from the union of Poseidon in the form of a horse with Demeter in the form of a mare (Pausanias 8.25.5).

The sacrifice performed in the Megaron also belonged in the same environment as the masked dances. The Arcadians, says Pausanias (8.37.8), "sacrifice victims many and plentiful. Each man sacrifices the kind of animal he possesses; instead of cutting the throat of the victims as in other sacrifices, each man chops off a limb at random

from the animal he offers.'' This fashion of killing the victims recalls the *diasparagmos* in the orgiastic cult of Dionysus.

In sum, the mysteries of the Megaron probably had almost no point of contact with those of Eleusis. The goddess-daughter, Despoina, is here much more important than Demeter; the sacrifice in which one strikes the animals at random and the masked dances to the sound of flutes or the *kithara* are suggestive of a much more ''inspired'' or ''enthusiastic'' environment, which betokens the distinctive nature of the Lykosoura cult and its goddess Despoina.

The existence of pan-Arcadian deities does not license us, even so, to speak of a unique Arcadian pantheon. There was no *single* way of assembling the gods in Arcadia. One must also resist the temptation to think in terms of a local groupings of cities. Each city had its pantheon, and there were as many pantheons as cities.

Local Pantheons and Distinctive Cults

Commonplace deities were given the functions with which they were associated throughout Greece: the principal phenomenon is the lack of Arcadian distinctiveness is in this respect. Let us take the example of Megalopolis (Pausanias 8.30.2–8.32.5). The functions relating to the defense of the city and its territory were undertaken by Athena Polias and those relating to earthquakes by Poseidon Asphaleios. The urban area was placed under the aegis of the deities one would expect, those who protect politics (Zeus Soter and Tyche); human groups (Hera Teleia for marriage, Apollo Epikourios for young men); those who protect health (Asclepius and Hygieia) and the individuals' physical development (Heracles and Hermes, near the stadium); and the gods protecting the arts and crafts (Muses, Apollo and Hermes, Aphrodite Machanitis, Ergatai gods). The protection of the sphere of fertility/fecundity and the protection of the pastoral life were assured by Demeter and the Great Goddesses, Dionysus, Artemis, and Pan. Two names here are distinctive: Epikourios (''Helper''), the epithet for Apollo (Pausanias 8.41.7), of military origin and Ergatai gods (''Workers''), a collective name for several gods associated with a citizen's daily life. But, for day-to-day functions, the Arcadians more usually contented themselves with divine names commonplace in Greece. Thus, Zeus is Soter in Megalopolis (Pausanias 8.30.10) and at Mantinea (Pausanias 8.9.1), in connection with the protection required by a city's foundation. When associated with the family, he is Zeus Teleios at Megalopolis (8.48.6), Zeus Patrōos at Tegea (*IG* v.2 63) and Zeus Epidōtēs at Mantinea (Pausanias 8.9.2). Likewise Athena, in her role as protectress of the city, is called Polias or Poliatis, Apollo is Agyieus, and Poseidon is Hippios (Jost 1985: index).

However, even if these epithets were apparently banal, their content could be rather less so. Athena Poliatis protected the city of Tegea and her iconography draws upon Athena's usual repertoire (Jost 1985:364–8). However, the legend attached to her sanctuary evinces a distinctive conception of her protective power. Athena Poliatis had made a gift to the city of a lock of hair of the Gorgon Medusa, which one only had to brandish above the ramparts for the enemy to take off in disarray (Pausanias 8.47.5; other sources contain the same report). Thus the goddess assured the city protection of a magical kind by means of this talisman. Another

interesting case is that of Apollo Agyieus at Tegea (Pausanias 8.53.1). The epithet Agyieus reflected the god's protection of streets; but he was also associated with the themes of an old agrarian cult: sterility sent by the gods in punishment for a murder, and rites instituted to appease them in accordance with an oracle from the Pythia (Jost, forthcoming (a)).

Poseidon Hippios' epithet also takes on a distinctive color in Arcadia. In his Achaea book Pausanias writes, "I assume that he owes his name to his role as the inventor of riding," and, after citing Homer and Pamphos, he concludes, "It is because of riding, and not for any other reason, that he received this name" (7.21.8–9). But in Arcadia, it was a different story. "The people of Thelpusa were the first of the Arcadians by whom Poseidon was surnamed Hippios" (Pausanias 8.25.7), and this time it is the birth of the horse Arion that justified the epithet: he was born from the union of Poseidon, transformed into a horse, with Demeter, who had taken on the shape of a mare. Thus the epithet is linked to the god's theriomorphism. It should also be noted that at Mantinea Poseidon Hippios appears to have been the protective deity of the city (Jost 1985:290–2; Mylonopoulos 2003:419–20); Poseidon Hippios accordingly had functions rather more extensive than those of a mere protector of horses.

In Arcadia, then, as we can see, the "panhellenic" epithets of deities were often employed with a connotation of particular relevance to the sanctuaries to which they were attached.

Some names are strictly Arcadian. The Megalai Theai ("Great Goddesses") of Megalopolis are an Arcadian invention probably connected with the foundation of the city of Megalopolis (Jost 1994; Stiglitz 1967); their name echoes that of the city. More often, it is the cultic epithet that bestows distinctiveness upon a "panhellenic" deity. Epithets allow us to learn about a multitude of individual local deities.

The distinctiveness of epithets is particularly clear when they witness ancient associations between local deities and deities that are basically panhellenic. In the case of Athena Alea, literary, epigraphical, numismatic, and archaeological testimonia combine to allow us to follow an evolution which led from the cult of Alea to those of Alea Athena and Athena Alea, fully within the historical period. The existence of a goddess Alea, independent of Athena, was a uniquely Arcadian phenomenon: she is attested at Mantinea (*IG* v.2 262 and 271: she underlies the tribal name Epalea). At Tegea, a fragment of a stele dated to around 525–520 BC records an athlete's dedication to Alea (*IG* v.2 75). The name of Aleos, the founder of the sanctuary of the goddess (Pausanias 8.45.4) and that of the games called Aleaia (*IG* v.2 142; Pausanias 8.47.4) likewise reflect a cult of Alea. In the archaic period Athena was present in the sanctuary of Alea at Tegea, although her name had yet to appear: a bronze votive statuette represents her in arms (Jost 1975: figs 16–18). In the classical period, the Tegean goddess is still called Alea by Xenophon (*Hellenica* 6.5.27) but Herodotus (1.66 and 9.70) and Euripides (*Auge*, Hypothesis 6) call her Alea Athena. Alea is given her name in the first instance and Athena appears to be a secondary deity in her role as epithet; Alea loses her autonomy, but not her precedence. The name Alea Athena is found still in Menander (*Heros* line 84), and then in Strabo (C388) and in two inscriptions of the first and second centuries AD (*IG* v.2 81 lines 6–7 and 50 line 2). In parallel, the name Athena Alea, which privileges Athena at the expense of Alea and reduces the latter to the role of epithet, is known from the third or second centuries BC from Tegean bronze coinage. This is also the form that Pausanias used.

Thus Athena Alea is attested before the name Alea Athena disappears. Affinities of personality encouraged the rapprochement between the two goddesses. Although the etymology of the name Alea escapes us, it evidently evoked the notion of "refuge" that belonged to Athena in her role as protector by arms. In the role of principal deity and that of epithet alike, Alea preserves the memory of an archaic deity.

Did an analogous process operate in still earlier times? The most interesting case is that of Demeter Erinys at Thelpusa (Pausanias 8.25.4–7). The existence of a Mycenaean deity *E-ri-nu*, attested twice (Rougemont forthcoming), constitutes an important indication that an independent goddess Erinys had anciently existed in Arcadia. Demeter Erinys' epithet was no longer understood in the age of Pausanias: by that time it was held to derive from an Arcadian verb *erinuein*, "cherish one's anger," and to refer to the emotions experienced by the goddess after being raped by Poseidon. However, an independent Erinys is attested by a scholium to Lycophron (on *Alexandra* line 1040): "Thelpusa: a city in Arcadia, where Erinys is worshiped" and Tzetzes (*Commentary on Lycophron*, *Alexandra* line 153) records that Demeter had sex with Poseidon "in the form of an Erinys." The figure of Erinys was therefore initially distinct from Demeter; it is permissible to believe that the Erinys continued the Mycenaean goddess *E-ri-nu* and survived as an epithet of Demeter at Thelpusa (Jost forthcoming (a)).

The epithets with the most direct connections with the Arcadian land furnished the greatest number of rare epithets. On the theme of weather, so important for countrymen, Zeus Storpaos ("Lightning," *IG* v.2 64), worshiped in the fifth century at Tegea, is otherwise unknown. Zeus Keraunos ("Thunderbolt," *IG* v.2 288), attested in the fifth century at Mantinea, is equally unique. Zeus, we should note, is identified with the physical manifestation of the thunderbolt, as opposed to the thunderbolt merely being his attribute. In the sphere of fertility and fecundity, which was fundamental for Arcadia's agricultural and pastoral economy, Demeter Melaina at Phigalia (Pausanias 8.42.1–13), Dionysus Auxitēs at Heraea (Pausanias 8.26.1), Apollo Kereatas either in the territory of Megalopolis (Pausanias 8.34.5) and Demeter Kidaria at Pheneos (Pausanias 8.15.1–3) were more authentically indigenous than Artemis Agrotera (Pausanias 8.32.4) or Apollo Nomios (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.23.57), who were widely known throughout the Greek world. In the former cases, the Arcadian occurrences are almost without parallel elsewhere. Sometimes the names are easy to understand, such as that of Dionysus Auxitēs, whose epithet conveys the fecund power of a deity who "increases" the gifts of nature; sometimes they are unusual, like Apollo Kereatas, the "Horned," protector of flocks, who perhaps has a counterpart in Cyprus. We are led to recognize in Demeter Melaina a goddess "of the dark," protector of the vegetation and its cycle, by the combination of the tale in which the goddess put on a black veil and withdrew into a cave and the vegetable offerings made to her. Her theriomorphic statue with a horse's head, recalling her union with Poseidon-as-horse, demonstrates in addition her affinities with the animal world. The epithet of Demeter Kidaria at Pheneos refers to the name of a dance and a hairstyle; her ritual, which included a priest dressed in a mask of the goddess whipping the inhabitants of the underworld with birches, indicates that she was a vegetation deity (Pausanias 8.15.3; Jost 1985:320–2).

The fields of womanhood and human reproduction gave rise to two distinctive epithets. Artemis Apanchomene ("Hanged") is unique to Kaphyai (Pausanias

8.23.7). Children had tied a thin cord round the goddess' neck (that is to say, the neck of her effigy) and said that she had been "hanged." The inhabitants of Kaphyai stoned them, whereupon a disease attacked the pregnant women, who lost their babies; the Delphic oracle ordained that they should make annual sacrifices for the children unjustly killed and call the goddess Apanchomene. The epithet has been related to the rite of hanging statuettes of agrarian deities from the branches of trees in order to guarantee fecundity. Another explanation invokes young girls who wished to remain virgins hanging themselves, and holds that the "Hanged" goddess protected them from such a death (Cole 2004:205–9). Women were also evoked by the epithet of Ares Gynaikothoinas, "Celebrated in women's feasts," at Tegea (Pausanias 8.48.4–6). The women had made a decisive intervention in a war against the Spartans, which they celebrated here with victory sacrifices and feasts in which men did not participate. The epithet testifies to the close relationship between the women and the god of war, and puts us in mind of the Amazons.

The legendary piety of the Arcadians was also the starting point for many local epithets that referred to cult organization. Artemis was Hiereia at Oresthasion (Pausanias 8.44.2) and Hymnia on the border between Mantinea and Orchomenus (Pausanias 8.13.1); in a sanctuary on Mount Krathis in Pheneatis Artemis Pyrōnia provided the Argives with a flame for their Lernaia festival, and, near Tegea, Dionysus Mystēs ("Initiate") recalled the initiation of the god at Eleusis (Pausanias 8.54.5). The biographies of the gods were equally evoked by some relatively exceptional epithets: thus Zeus Lecheatēs, ("he who has given birth") brought Athena into the world at Aliphera (Pausanias 8.26.6), and Asclepius Pais ("Child") was born at Thelpusa (Pausanias 8.25.11). We should also note three epithets of Hera at Stymphalus: Hera Pais, when she was still a virgin, Teleia, when she had married Zeus, and Chēra ("Widow"), when she had separated herself from Zeus (Pausanias 8.22.2). These epithets, perhaps tied to a cult cycle centered on *hieros gamos* ("sacred marriage"), were explained by the episodes of the goddess' biography (Jost 1997:88–9).

Finally, new divine names could find their origins in particular historical events. Upon the foundation of Megalopolis the Arcadians adopted an epithet to express the solidarity essential for the development of the new city: Zeus Philios ("of friendship") had a statue sculpted by the younger Polyclitus (Pausanias 8.31.4). His epithet illustrates the *philia* bound, according to Aristotle (*Politics* 1280b) to the notion of fatherland. The statue was a composite: "shod with buskins, the god held a vessel to drink from in one hand and a thyrsus in the other with an eagle perching on it"; the statue combined traits of Dionysus, the god of the symposium and of conviviality, with traits of Zeus, the civic god and the ruler (Jost 1996a:105).

The pantheons of the Arcadian cities were assembled from deities both commonplace or "panhellenic" and strictly Arcadian and local. But they were also characterized by the recurrence of particular groupings among the divine powers. Although there are expected groupings, such as that of Demeter and Kore, others contrast with a distinct local flavor. The presence of armed *propoloi* ("attendants") beside female deities – the Giants beside Rhea (Pausanias 8.32.5) and Anytos beside Demeter (8.37.5–6) – may go back to an ancient substratum (Jost 1985:335–6). Also quite unusual, in mythical terms, are the appearance of Demeter and Poseidon as a pair (Pausanias 8.25.5–7) and the designation of Artemis as the daughter of Demeter at

Lykosoura. In other cases it is the balance between two associated deities that is unusual: the precedence of the daughter (Despoina or Kore) over Demeter, still perceptible in the Roman era, is a typical example of this (Jost 1996b:199).

Arcadian Myths

Some distinctively Arcadian features can thus be detected in the deities and their cults, but did Arcadia also have, in parallel, a distinctive "religious imagination?"

One strand of Arcadian mythology derives from what might be termed the "common store of Greek mythology": these are the myths of divine births (Poseidon, Zeus, Hermes), agrarian myths (when Athena or Demeter deprives the earth of its fruits in her wrath), and stories of raped princesses (Auge, Phialo) or heroic exploits such as those of Heracles. Other myths are more specifically Arcadian in character, namely those which include theriomorphism: the punishment of Lykaon with transformation into a wolf, or the transformation of Poseidon and Demeter into horses.

The tales of divine births stake the claim that Arcadia played a major role in the biographies of the gods. The Arcadians adapted a "panhellenic" myth in order to acclimatize Poseidon to their country. Near the spring of Arne, close to Mantinea, Rhea had told Kronos that she had given birth to a horse and had given him a foal to eat instead of his child, "as she next gave him a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes instead of Zeus" (Pausanias 8.8.2). The legend is modeled on the panhellenic legend of the birth of Zeus, but the foal evokes Poseidon's affinities with the horse.

The birth of Zeus became the subject of official tradition amongst the Arcadians. Zeus was reared, they said, on Mount Lykaion; there was on Lykaion a place called Krētea. According to them it was this place, and not the island of Crete, that witnessed the childhood of the god. "To the nymphs by whom, as they say, Zeus was reared, they give the names Thiso, Neda and Hagno" (Pausanias 8.38.2–3). This legend, which sought to make Arcadia the homeland of Zeus, asserts at once both the country's antiquity and its particularly sacred character. Callimachus proposed, in his *Hymn to Zeus* (*Hymn* 1, lines 10–54) a sort of compromise between Crete and Arcadia: the birth of Zeus was located in Parrhasia, on Mount Lykaion, in a "place now sacred," whereas his *kourotrophia*, his rearing, took place in Crete. The precedence is thus given to Arcadia, which is the place in which Zeus came into the world. The existence of the toponym Krētea justified Arcadian claims.

The Arcadians had to compromise with another of their local traditions to establish this official version centered on Mount Lykaion, namely that of Zeus' birth at Methydrion. "The Methydrion tradition," writes Pausanias (8.36.2–3), "holds that Rhea, pregnant with Zeus, arrived on Mount Thaumasion and secured an offer of help from Hoplodamos and all the other giants who accompanied him, in case Kronos should come to attack her. The people of Methydrion admit that she gave birth somewhere on Lykaion, but it is in their own territory that they locate the deception of Kronos and the substitution of the child with a stone, in accordance with the myth of the Greeks." Clearly, the people of Methydrion initially located the entire myth in their own land, since it is hardly logical that Rhea should tarry on Mount Thaumasion prior to the birth of Zeus, then give birth without protection on Mount Lykaion, and then give the deceitful stone to her husband on Mount

Thaumasion again. This incoherence is the sign of a compromise. It is tempting to locate the revision of the Methydrion tradition and the focus upon an official version at the time of the creation of the Arcadian League (Jost 1985:241–9, 2002b:380–1). Particularly localized traditions, which held that Zeus had been bathed in the Lousios (Pausanias 8.28.2) and that Rhea had purified herself in the Neda (8.41.2), subsisted in their own right until the time of Pausanias without being subject to modification.

So far as the birth and infancy of Hermes was concerned, an official Arcadian tradition located the god's education in Parrhasia, at Akakesion. A statue of Hermes Akakesios was preserved there: "The infant Hermes was reared in this place and Akakos, the son of Lykaon, was his stepfather" (Pausanias 8.36.10). The resemblance between the toponymic epithet Akakesios and the Homeric epithet of Hermes *akakēta* ("he who does no harm") must have been the starting point of Arcadian claims about Hermes (Pausanias 8.3.2). This official version, doubtless generated at the time of the creation of the Arcadian League, seems to have prevailed in Arcadia; it relegated the region of Mount Cyllene to a secondary position. The theme of the god's birth on Mount Cyllene was a literary one in Greece, known above all from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. But when Pausanias visited Pheneos and Cyllene, he recorded no *logos*, either about the union of Zeus and Maia or about the birth of the young Hermes, in his *Periegesis*. Two Pheneate traditions alone were recorded, these bearing upon the toponyms of the episodes of the god's infancy: the Trikrena mountains, with three springs where the nymphs bathed the newborn Hermes (8.16.1) and Mount Chelydorea, where Hermes made a lyre after finding a tortoise (8.17.5). It all seems as if in Arcadia even the god, so often called "Cyllenian" in Greek literature, had been appropriated by the Parrhasians and by Megalopolis, where Hermes Akakesios was worshiped (Jost 1998a:235–6).

The myths of divine birth testify to the various sanctuaries' desire to assert precedence. But in this we are not dealing with a uniquely Arcadian phenomenon. Other myths have a more indigenous resonance: these are the myths that underline the precariousness of the boundaries between animals, men, and gods. Such is the myth of Lykaon's transformation into a wolf, or that of Demeter's metamorphosis into a mare and Poseidon's into a stallion.

Lykaon, the second mythical king of Arcadia after Pelasgos, became the subject of a tale of metamorphosis in the Mount Lykaion sanctuary, and this is recorded by Pausanias (8.2.3). "He laid a newborn human on the altar of Zeus Lykaios, sacrificed the baby, and smeared the blood over the altar; and it is said that immediately after the sacrifice, he became a wolf instead of a man." According to other versions (Jost 1985:261 nn.6–7, 262 nn.1–12) the transformation of Lykaon (and/or that of his sons) into a wolf resulted from a sacrilegious feast: in order to test whether they were in the presence of a god, Lykaon and/or his sons set human flesh before Zeus. The responsibility for this action was attributed sometimes to Lykaon, sometimes, in a version that absolves the king and presents him as a pious man, to his sons, the Lykaonids. The victim was, according to the sources, a guest of Lykaon, a Molossian hostage he was keeping at his court, or, more often, a child, sometimes even one of Lykaon's own sons or his grandson, Arkas. Zeus, enraged, overturned the banqueting table, bringing a dramatic end to the commensality of men and gods. He inflicted, besides, punishment on those responsible: sometimes Lykaon is transformed into a wolf, sometimes he is struck by a thunderbolt, or he sees his house struck as he

changes into a wolf; the Lykaonids for their part are struck at the same time as he is, or else some of them are struck while others are transformed into wolves. Several sources add that, to punish the human race, Zeus sent a devastating flood. Amongst the retributions inflicted on Lykaon and his sons, it should be noted that metamorphosis into a wolf is presented as a punishment equivalent to the thunderbolt or flooding.

The theme of Lykaon's metamorphosis into a wolf and the werewolf traditions of Mount Lykaion have been subject to diverse interpretations (Jost forthcoming (b)). First it was considered to be the etiological myth of a cult of a men-wolves who worshiped a wolf-god or that of a brotherhood of men-wolves who had a wolf for token (e.g., Jeanmaire 1939:558–65). Then explanations began to focus on the notion that metamorphosis into a wolf was equivalent to a symbolic death in a rite of tribal initiation (e.g., Bonnechere 1994:85–96; Burkert 1983:84–93). The most recent explanations turn on the idea of bestiality. Lykaon is an ambivalent character: a civilizing hero, he "founded the city of Lykosoura on Mount Lykaion, he gave Zeus the epithet Lykaios and instituted the Lykaia games" (Pausanias 8.2.3). The human sacrifice he offers to Zeus Lykaios has a double significance: holy, it founds a rite; sacrilegious, it incurs punishment. Zeus chooses to punish Lykaon's impiety by turning him into an animal that similarly symbolizes wildness. The bestiality into which Lykaon is plunged illustrates the contrast between the civilization that he had established and the wild world to which his action brings him. Lykaon the king is the first civilized man and Lykaon the wolf is an animal, a wolf, the symbol of the world of the animals in contrast to mankind and its institutions. In the figure of Lykaon human behavior and animal behavior contrast with each other in succession. Henceforth, the gods refuse commensality with men and Lykaon's "transgression" is punished by a "regression" into the condition of a wild animal, the wolf (e.g., Forbes Irving 1990:90–5; Jost forthcoming (b)).

Another animal transformation is that of Demeter and Poseidon, who of their own volition temporarily took on the form of horses. The story took place at Thelpusa and at Phigalia, but its impact extended beyond this region and spread across the whole of Arcadia. "The people of Thelpusa were the first of the Arcadians by whom Poseidon was surnamed Hippios," recalls Pausanias (8.25.7), as we have seen. Accordingly, the Thelpusa story served as an etiology for the naming of Poseidon Hippios throughout Arcadia.

The myth was localized beside the Ladon: "When Demeter was wandering," Pausanias records (8.25.5–7):

> as she searched for her daughter, Poseidon, if we may believe the tale, pursued her, seized with a desire to have sex with her; and so she transformed herself into a mare and began to graze, mingling herself with the mares of Onkos, but Poseidon understood that he was being tricked and had sex with Demeter after having himself taken on the form of a stallion. At the time Demeter had been enraged by what had happened. But in due course she had wanted, it is said, to lay aside her anger and take a bath in the Ladon. Following this, the goddess received her epithets: because of her anger, that of "Erinys" (since "to cherish one's anger" is termed *erinuein* in Arcadian), and then that of "Lousia" because she "bathed" [*louein*] herself in the Ladon . . . Demeter, as it is told, bore to Poseidon a daughter, whose name it is not customary to utter to the uninitiated, and the horse Arion.

Demeter's quest for her daughter exhibits Eleusinian influence, but it has no impact on the remainder of the narrative. This is centered rather on the union of Demeter-as-mare with Poseidon, on the anger of the goddess that offers explanation of her two epithets, and on the fruit of the union of the two deities: a daughter and the horse Arion.

The birth of the horse Arion shows that the transformation into horses is not there just to make a good story. It conveys the profound affinity between the world of the gods and that of the animals. It is to Poseidon that the horse is linked and not Demeter, even if, in Arcadia, the goddess took the initiative in changing herself into a mare. In the *Thebaid* (Pausanias 8.25.8) Arion's mane bears the same epithet, *kuanochaitēs* ("blue-black"), that was often used to characterize Poseidon. Poseidon is repeatedly portrayed as the father of a horse in Greek myth. One thinks of Pegasus, born in Corinth from the god's union with Medusa, or of Skyphios, the Thessalian horse born of the earth. Poseidon is the constant factor in these various cases. It is to him, not to his partner, that the horse is linked, and in fact we find the name of Poseidon's partners varying between mythographers in the case of the same child (Jost 1985:307 and n.). Thus Arion is sometimes given Erinys as his mother, sometimes Gaia, sometimes a Harpy, or even the Gorgon Medusa. Other partners of Poseidon took on the form of mares in order to give themselves to him. Medusa is sometimes represented with a horse's tail. Euripides put Melanippe, with the evocative name of "black horse" on stage in one of his lost tragedies: from her union with Poseidon were born Boiotos and Aiolos (Bregli-Pulci Doria 1986:112). It was inevitably therefore to Poseidon that Demeter had to bear the horse Arion. Poseidon was, besides, worshiped with the epithet Hippios in no less than five regions of Arcadia: Mantinea (Pausanias 8.10.5), Pheneos (8.14.2), Thelpusa (8.25.7), Methydrion (8.36.2), and Lykosoura (8.37.10). It should be recalled that it was in worship of Poseidon that the Arcadians threw horses into the spring of Dine (Pausanias 8.7.2). But the Thelpusan episode – perhaps initially associated with the old goddess Erinys – was a surprisingly unconventional one for Demeter, a goddess so widely regarded as the mother of a daughter. Hence the legend of Demeter's transformation into a horse and her theriomorphic union with Poseidon. For Demeter, the equine form is only temporary and is found nowhere else.

At Phigalia, the story of the union of Poseidon and Demeter was the same as at Thelpusa: "However, the being borne by Demeter, according to the Phigalians, was not a horse, but the deity the Arcadians call Despoina" (Pausanias 8.42.1). The transformation of Poseidon and Demeter does not find expression here in the birth of a horse, but it is echoed in the semi-theriomorphic wooden statue of the goddess that was described to Pausanias (8.42.4): it was a woman sitting on a rock, who had "the head and mane of a horse, and images of snakes and other wild animals were attached to her head." Poseidon had no cult, and it was upon Demeter that the theriomorphism was concentrated. But the origin of this theriomorphism was, nonetheless, still to be found in her union with Poseidon, transformed into a horse.

Some have wished to find the memory of a horse-god in Poseidon's transformation into a horse. Farnell (1896–1909:4.15) speaks of a "horse-god" and, according to F. Schachermeyr (1950), the Greeks had originally worshiped a horse-god (Hippos) before reassigning his cult to Poseidon Hippios. He had originally been conceived of, between 1900 and 1600 BC, from a "peasant" perspective, as a fertility and water

deity; then between 1600 and 1200 BC a developing "feudal" concept had gradually transformed the horse-god Hippos into the god Hippios, "master of the horses," under the influence of the role now played by the harness. The hypothesis essentially rests on texts that express a fundamental link between Poseidon and the horse. I once sought to support this theory with a Mycenaean tablet in which L.R. Palmer explained *i-qo* as the name of a god (Jost 1985:283–4). But it seems that this is rather the name of a man (Lejeune 1958:289). In any case, there is nothing to license the existence of a horse-god. I had also drawn support for this position, following others, from the Mantinean legend on the birth of Poseidon: "When Rhea had given birth to Poseidon, she laid him down amongst a flock so that he could live with the sheep; the spring Arne drew its name from the fact that sheep [*arnes*] surrounded it. Rhea told Kronos that she had given birth to a horse and gave him a foal to eat in place of her child [*anti tou paidos*], as she next gave him a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes" (Pausanias 8.8.2).

Fougères (1898:227) spoke of the "so-called horse borne by Rhea and the foal presented to Kronos." Thus, in interpreting Rhea's ruse, he understood that Poseidon had been born in the form of a horse. He concluded that Poseidon had "the body of a horse" and that we were dealing with "an animal cult of the horse." Along similar lines Festugière (1944:38) wrote on the births of Zeus and Poseidon: "These two parallel cases invite the same explanation: if Zeus replaces a sacred stone, Poseidon was in origin a horse." If the two cases are parallel, the parallelism consists rather in the fact that Rhea both times gave birth to a child, *pais*, that she hid sometimes in a cave and sometimes among a flock. The ruse consisting of giving Kronos a stone or a foal takes place later. It cannot be denied, in Poseidon's case, that the ruse indicates a very strong bond between Poseidon and the horse, but it does not imply the existence of a horse-god. The ruse explains the epithet Hippios that the god bore at Mantinea, without necessarily being linked to an "archaic" conception of the god. The tale's degree of antiquity, like its origin (Arcadian or Boeotian?) cannot be determined. Whatever it was, Arcadian gods were not animals in origin, any more than Zeus was a sacred stone: like the wolf-god of Mount Lykaion, or Artemis the bear (Jost, forthcoming (b)), Poseidon the horse should be forgotten.

Let us return to the Thelpusa tale. The metamorphoses of Poseidon and Demeter are ruses employed by these deities. This is not the token of a divine essence: the metamorphosis is temporary (in Demeter's case we think of the metamorphoses of Thetis when she wanted to escape Peleus and, in Poseidon's case, of the metamorphoses of Zeus when pursuing his beloveds). It illustrates a very strong bond, as we have said, between Poseidon and the horse. Besides, metamorphosis into a horse is particularly appropriate to the theme of the violent relationship between Poseidon and Demeter, as A. Avagianou has stressed (1991:145–63). It is not a matter of a "sacred marriage" (*hieros gamos*) between two deities, but of a rape. The god accomplishes his will through constraint. The horse offers an appropriate image for the wild character of this union. A tempestuous and impulsive character was also attributed to Pegasus, who made the spring of Hippocrene gush forth with a blow of his hoof (Strabo C379). For Poseidon, the violence he displays reflects the wild forces of the chthonic god. For Demeter, the myth reveals two contradictory but complementary aspects. Her wild nature is embodied by the Poseidonian mare and by her anger, which inflicts sterility upon the land of Phigalia. Once she is appeased and

purified of her anger (Lousia), she is – explicitly at Phigalia at any rate – the goddess of grain and the life of cultivation, who presides over the vegetation and the fertility of the land. At Thelpusa the ambivalence of Demeter, angered then reconciled, hostile then beneficent in turn, is underlined by the splitting of the goddess into two, with her two epithets, Erinys and Lousia.

Conclusion

Let us conclude. The elements of an Arcadian religious system manifest themselves at two levels, the pan-Arcadian level and that of local pantheons. Three deities are worshiped by all the Arcadians in common and these structure Arcadian religion: Pan and Zeus Lykaios, whom the coinage of Megalopolis took as symbols of the Arcadian League, are two. To them we must certainly add Despoina, endowed by her sanctuary and her monuments with an importance out of all proportion to that of the city of Lykosoura. These deities sometimes have an archaic and wild aspect (Zeus Lykaios), and sometimes they are directly linked to the animal world, like Pan or Despoina. Otherwise, the Arcadian religious system is the sum of the local pantheons which had specific traits in common. One often finds here the same deities as elsewhere in Greece, but the epithets that are ostensibly the most banal sometimes cover a distinctively Arcadian treatment (Athena Poliatis, Apollo Agyieus, Poseidon Hippios). Other, more distinctive epithets preserve the memory of old local deities (Athena Alea, Demeter Erinys). Others again are to be related to the Arcadians' principal preoccupations: agricultural and pastoral activities (and hence the weather and the mechanisms of fertility and fecundity); religious life (Polybius reminds us of the Arcadians' reputation for piety, 4.20.1); and the political history of the region, which gave rise to some new creations (Megalai Theai, Zeus Philios).

The Arcadian mythical universe offers the same impression: an affirmation of a strong religious identity contrasts with the commonplace nature of some themes. This is conveyed by the tales of divine births that attach to the great gods in Arcadia. It flourishes in the myths of transformation into animals: Zeus transforms Lykaon into a wolf, Poseidon and Demeter change themselves into horses. These tales in no way suggest that there had been an animal-god phase in Arcadian religion. For the sacrilegious hero, metamorphosis represents a regression into an animal state. This is the regression with which the inhabitants of Kynaitha were threatened, according to Polybius (4.21.6) when they renounced the institutions that had been put in place in order to "civilize and soften . . . the harsh side of their character" and they "sank into bestiality." The theme goes hand in hand with Arcadia's reputation for harshness. Among the gods of the country, metamorphosis demonstrates a very strong bond and affinity with the animal world. There is no other part of Greece where the relationship of the divine with animals expresses itself so spontaneously in myth, not to mention cult image.

However, the Arcadian religious system did not develop in a vacuum, and the goddesses of Eleusis, for example, found their place in the cities' pantheons. But the Despoina of Lykosoura, who holds Eleusinian objects in her hands, was worshiped in orgiastic rites with animal costumes. In this regard, she is particularly representative of the distinctive face of Arcadian religion.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

After V. Bérard's now obsolete thesis of the Phoenician origin of Arcadian cults (Bérard 1894), the study of Arcadian religion aroused hardly any interest until the 1960s and 1970s. Then two monographs appeared on the indigenous deities, the Great Goddesses of Arcadia (Stiglitz 1967) and Pan (Borgeaud 1979), whilst Piccaluga (1968) devoted a work to the myth of Lykaon. We then had to wait until 1985 for a discussion of the sanctuaries and cults of Arcadia (Jost 1985), which should be consulted for detailed consideration of the sources and for earlier bibliography.

Since 1985 two general studies on Arcadia (Nielsen and Roy 1999 and Nielsen 2002) have enriched our understanding of the historical, economic, and social context in which Arcadian religion developed. General studies on various aspects of Greek religion have paid attention to Arcadia. On the subject of human sacrifice, Hughes (1991) and Bonnechere (1994) have looked at the rites of Mount Lykaion. On the subject of myths of metamorphosis into animals, Forbes Irving has re-examined the cases of Lykaon and Kallisto (1990), and Avagianou (1991) has reinterpreted Poseidon's and Demeter's transformations into horses. Mylonopoulos (2003) has collected the material available on Poseidon in that year.

Other studies have focused upon Arcadia itself. Bregli-Pulci Doria (1986) investigates Demeter Erinys. On the material side, Hübinger (1992, 1993) focuses on the bronze statuettes of Berekla and the iconography of Pan and shepherds, with a particularly valuable catalog. The author of the present chapter has written a series of articles addressed to particular aspects of Arcadian religion: the deities (Jost 1987/8 and 1994) and their epithets (Jost, forthcoming (a)); the organization of local pantheons (Jost 1996a, 1996b, 1998a); the myths (1997); the rites of human sacrifice (2002a); and the mysteries (2002c). A historiographical article (Jost forthcoming (b)) puts into perspective the different interpretations to which the myths of the transformations of Lykaon and Kallisto have given rise. Cardete del Olmo 2005 (seen only after the drafting of this chapter) investigates the "religious landscape" of Phigalia and Parrhasia.

Finally, two recent editions (Jost 1998b and Moggi and Osanna 2003) offer detailed commentaries on Book 8 of Pausanias' *Guide to Greece*, which is a major source for our knowledge of Arcadian religion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This text has been translated from the French by the editor, to whom I express sincere and warm thanks.

PART VI

Social Organization, the Family, and Sex

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Religion and Society in Classical Greece

Charles W. Hedrick Jr.

Introduction

According to Aristotle, "man is a political animal" (*Politics* 1253a3): it is the nature of people to live in groups such as the polis. Religion, like all other human activity, is a social activity. From the time of Durkheim, sociologists have emphasized the coherence of religion and society. Students of religion, including Greek religion, have generally accepted the point without demur. In religion contingent social values and practices are hypostasized. Religious beliefs, as manifested in myth and ritual, are then re-presented to society as transcendental, authoritative. By "justifying God's ways to man" religion reconciles society to its own ways and hierarchies: religion is society's worship of itself. Because it is thought to represent the absolute, religion has always been closely identified with acculturation, the inculcation of fundamental social values.

This position has proved to have great explanatory power; nevertheless, many will regard it as overstated. Is religion simply society's stooge, the apotheosis of "hegemonic social values"? To what extent does religious morality cohere with prevailing social values? For that matter, how coherent is society itself? Such doubts reflect a tradition of religious thought going back in the Christian world at least to the fourth century AD and Augustine's influential divorce of the political "city of the earth" from the religious *City of God*. Christian society, for Augustine, is an ideal society, and its contrasting presence demeans those who must live in the corrupt secular world and inspires them to hope for better. Christians have ever since tended to see themselves not as avatars of prevailing social values, but as "conscientious objectors," or even (in extreme cases) as guerrillas for godliness. Their faith they see as "untimely," out of step with secular society. As a consequence they experience and teach religion as a mandate to be a force for change in the world.

It would be a mistake to regard this attitude as mere self-delusion, an appetite for fragrant but inedible "pie in the sky by and by." Christian social activism has a long

and well-documented history of effectiveness, and it can be credited with many notable successes. In America, for example, it is a founding principle of the state that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" (the First Amendment): the Founding Fathers, schooled by the Reformation and Enlightenment experiences of violent sectarianism, believed that religion had the potential to destabilize the political order; so they established the doctrine of "the separation of church and state." History has repeatedly proved their fears. The American colonies themselves were founded as a result of religious conflict. During the American Civil War the abolitionist movement was promoted to a large degree through religious organizations; the same phenomenon can be observed in the 1960s civil rights movement. In worship the poor have traditionally found and continue to find an outlet for hostility toward the wealthy; religion and class warfare go hand in hand. The "Liberation Theology" professed by some Catholic priests expedited class conflict in Central America and elsewhere. Religious activism played an important part in the demise of east European communist regimes and in the bloody conflicts in the Near East and central Europe over the past twenty years.

The theory of religious and social coherence further presumes that society itself is coherent. The structural integrity of society is not self-evident; indeed, at first glance such a monolithic perspective appears to be a grotesque over-simplification. Given the patent complexity of even individual social status might we not better imagine individuals as members of many conflicting groups, including religious groups, rather than as smoothly meshing cogs in some well-lubricated social machine? For sociologists, society is by definition coherent; if it is not, it is not a (single) society. Individuals are circumscribed by society, in the singular; apparent contradictions in their status need to be reconciled. Incoherence is unintelligible, and its recognition in a society would be tantamount to an admission of disciplinary inadequacy.

The objection is obvious, and sociologists have traditionally countered that social incoherence is only apparent; conflicts embody dynamic oppositions that are intrinsic to the social order, and even work to maintain its stability. So, for example, racial tensions in America today might work to channel the energy of the poor along (relatively) harmless ethnic lines: poor Anglos may hate poor Hispanics and Blacks and vice versa, rather than uniting to direct their hostilities more dangerously, against the wealthy. Or again, allowing a person of low economic status (say a janitor) to hold a position of importance (say the deaconship of a church) provides an outlet for thwarted aspirations and helps reconcile the poor to their subordination.

Religion, however, provides only one kind of access to knowledge of the transcendent; it has competitors. By the third quarter of the fifth century BC Greek philosophy clearly offered itself as an alternative to religious knowledge; since the time of Galileo, philosophy's descendant, empirical science, has offered another. The competition of religion with philosophy, and later with science, illustrates that not only the content of knowledge matters, but also the character of the knowing. The "scientific method" has proved corrosive of religious faith and arguably even of the moral values traditionally promoted by religion. However that may be, it seems reasonable that an order of knowledge based on tradition and authority will be compatible with comparable social orders, while an order of knowledge based on debate and consensus will be compatible with those in which power is managed through group discussions and resolutions. For those who believe in the ultimate

authority of god and a divinely ordained human order, what room is left for political self-determination and individual freedom?

I concentrate here on the relationship between religion and society in classical Athens. Greek society and religion are attested in most detail from Athens; it is not possible to approach the problem except in a very abstract way with regard to any other Greek state. Athens is in many respects an exceptional case: for much of the classical period it is the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful of the Greek city-states. But then, it is not clear that any other Greek state would be more "representative" than Athens. Which Greek polis is "typical"? Doubtless the Greek city-states shared many cultural traits, but is there such a thing as a general "Greek society"? Or were there as many different societies as political entities?

It might reasonably be objected that the examples I have cited so far have been taken from the modern world of vast multi-ethnic nation-states in which monotheistic religion is the rule. The ancient Greek city-states were more intimate and socially homogeneous, and a relatively tolerant, assimilative polytheism was the rule. It is a truism that ancient religion is civic religion, a more or less overt extension of the social and political order. In this context the basic dichotomies that we find in the modern world, including even the opposition of religion and society, were not recognized. There is certainly some truth in this position; critical evaluation of it requires consideration of an ancient case. As a preliminary, however, it is also necessary to consider the history of the concepts of religion and society and their relationship.

History of the Problem

Discussion of the relationship between religion and society is hampered from the outset by the absence of agreed definitions for either term. The problem is due in part to a fetishistic obsession with the reality of "society" and "religion" – as if such abstractions could ever really "be." Such words do not describe existing things, but reflect ways of thinking about the world. They may describe historically contingent social attitudes; they may be useful contemporary analytic categories, but in neither case do they describe the concrete or tangible. It will be convenient here to adopt definitions consistent with Durkheim's argument. By "society" I mean the categories of the person (statuses) and the systematic relationships between these categories (group relations). By "religion" I mean beliefs, manifested in word and deed (or myth and ritual), in the transcendental, the deathless, unchanging, true or natural: what is other than the world of contingent, practical experience, and thus can serve as a model for it. The relationship as I imagine it is roughly analogous to that between the specific and the general, practice and theory.

Definitions should be qualified by a consideration of the history of the terms and their opposition. In the earliest Greek authors such as Hesiod, human experience is regarded as a unified whole. Certainly Hesiod understood the distinction between the divine and the human, the sacred and the profane. Religion, however, was not understood as an autonomous region of human life, any more than were other essential categories of modern analysis, such as "the political" or "social" or "economic": these the ancients regarded as integrated, or (in modern academic

parlance) "embedded." Similarities between this unified conception of religion and society and the modern sociological theory of coherence are only apparent. While sociologists argue that religion and society are complicit, they presume discrete regions of behavior.

The idea of religion as a distinguishable realm of human activity becomes prominent in the sixth century BC with the philosopher Xenophanes. So, for example, he observes that people have conceived the gods in human terms, as projections of themselves: "mortals think that the gods are born, and that they have clothes and speech and bodies like their own" (fr. 14 D-K). Xenophanes here segregates religion, treats it as a distinct object of speculation. He insists on the fundamental difference between the divine and the human, and criticizes the obtuseness of those who cannot see the distinction. In an even more famous fragment he remarks that "Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is a shame and reproach among men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other" (fr. 11). From the moment that religion is isolated as an object of investigation, its connection with morality and its importance as an educative example is also recognized. The morality attributed to the gods can and should be a model for people, and representation of divine immorality has the potential to corrupt believers. The relationship of religion and morality will occupy philosophers down to the end of antiquity.

A generation or more after Xenophanes authors continue to write as though religion and the world of the human are thoroughly integrated. In Herodotus' histories, for instance, religion plays a frequent and decisive role in human actions (for a brief example see his account of the fate of Polycrates, 3.40–3). With the Sophistic movement at the end of the fifth century BC, however, the opposition between the human and the divine is firmly established. Some are now comfortable discussing human affairs entirely without reference to the divine. The great example is the austere Athenian historian Thucydides, an extreme rationalist by the standards of any period of antiquity. When he does treat religion, it is often with irony (see the backhanded deprecation of oracles at 5.26, or the great debate about morality and religion in the "Melian dialogue," notably at 5.103–5). The exemplary account of the Sophistic opposition of reason and religion is provided in Plato's *Defense of Socrates*, delivered against the charge that "Socrates does wrong because he does not believe in the gods that the city believes in, but introduces other spirits; he also does wrong in corrupting the youth." The relationship of the gods to justice remains central in much of Plato's writing (see for instance the beginning of the *Republic*).

For Greeks the alternative to religion was not society but politics. The modern English word "politics" derives from the Greek, *ta politika*, which means, literally, "things pertaining to the polis," the characteristic Greek community-formation. When Greeks speak of "politics" they allude to group life, as manifested in a specifically Greek organization. The Greek "political" takes in not only the classic modern idea of the political – i.e., the institutional forms and activities used by the state to make decisions about day-to-day life – but also those spheres of behavior that we today characterize as social and economic: they did not think of the social as something apart from the political.

The Greek idea of the political emerges in tandem with the idea of religion; the segregation of the one creates space for the other. For example, isolation of religion makes it possible to imagine an area in which people can "make their world,"

through decisions and actions. So Aristotle rigorously excluded the religious from his account in his *Politics*. Plato had gone further, subordinating religion to politics. In his account of the founding of an ideal state, *The Laws*, he notes that since it is crucial for those in the state "to have the right thoughts about the gods" (888b), the state should regulate religious observance.

With Augustine's *City of God*, there emerges a more categorical distinction between religion and politics: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" The modern recognition of distinguishable, internally coherent regions of human behavior can be traced to this work. Here Augustine draws a fundamental distinction between the earthly city and the heavenly city. Although Christians are forced to live in this imperfect world, they should keep their eyes on heaven. Augustine's philosophical argument reflects and epitomizes a real political development. With Christianity the old civic unity of religion and politics was sundered; church and state were separated. Augustine's vision dominated the medieval world. Political philosophers, beginning with the Renaissance, adopted his insights by standing his argument on its head. Thus Machiavelli, though lamenting the dissolution of the integrated lives of the ancients, nevertheless accepts that the religious and the political have nothing to do with one another; without denying religion, he proceeds to study the political "on its own terms," without God.

The modern idea of the social emerges in the Enlightenment when Machiavelli's intellectual heirs, such as Hobbes, developed Social Contract Theory. These thinkers were interested in the nature of human communities. The problem drew them on to the question of origins, and they began to consider human group interactions as they might have existed separate from and even preceding the development of the political state. So at the outset the idea of the social might be characterized as the "human pre-political."

Athenian Society

Ancient discussions of status privilege what we might call "political society," categories of the person as defined by the state. In broadest perspective the various political statuses can be divided into two groups: natives (citizens, women, children) and aliens (metics, barbarians, slaves). Status categories were united by their shared subordination and dependence on the citizen. The point is illustrated by the Greek concept of the family, or *oikos*. The *oikos* included more than the modern idea of the "nuclear family." In addition to parents and children, possessions – slaves, livestock, even farm tools – were members of the *oikos*. What all these members of the *oikos* have in common is their subjection to the father. The same dependence ideally prevailed in the more general political community. Resident aliens, for example, could not represent themselves in Athenian law courts, but had the protection of the law only on the condition that a citizen protector (in Greek, a *prostatēs*) was willing to stand up and speak on their behalf.

Ancient slaves did not comprise an economic class, but a political status. Athenian slaves had no specialized economic function: they are to be found in almost every capacity, often working side by side with free men. From the time of Solon it was illegal for Athenians to enslave Athenians. As a consequence freedom became a

central political ideal and the inalienable characteristic of the citizen, while enslavement of aliens flourished. For this reason among others it appears that slaves were regarded in the first place as anti-citizens. They obviously had no civic rights, but were at the disposal of their masters – living tools, in Aristotle's famous phrase. When, on rare occasions, they were manumitted, they assumed the status of metics. Seldom were freedmen or their descendants granted citizenship (the famous exception comes in the fourth century with the family of the freedman banker Pasion). Slaves did not sit at the bottom of some economic continuum, at the top of which sat citizens; they were of a different order entirely.

Resident aliens, metics, had no inherent political rights, and, at least until the latter part of the fifth century, almost no prospect of obtaining them. From the last quarter of the fifth century on, "naturalization" is more frequently attested, but it remains a rare privilege. We do not know the size of metic population or its ethnic make-up, though we hear on occasion of the activities of certain ethnic groups, apparently substantial; certain metics were wealthy and even politically influential; others were poor. They did not comprise, as some have thought, a "merchant class." Plato's *Republic* begins when Socrates goes down to the Piraeus to watch a procession of Thracians, who have been granted the exceptional privilege of observing a festival in honor of Bendis; the dialogue takes place in the house of one of the most famous metic families, that of Kephalos, a metic from Syracuse, who made his money from a shield "factory" staffed by numerous slaves.

Native children and women enjoyed a peculiar, ambivalent status. They were neither outsiders to the political community nor were they full participants. While they enjoyed the protections of the state, they shared only imperfectly in its management. Children in the ancient world, as in the modern, were excluded from full participation in the political order. Because they would someday become citizens, full participants, however, they do not belong in the same category as metics. Rather, as Aristotle says, they are to be regarded as "imperfect" citizens. Native women likewise were necessarily part of the civic order, though they did not enjoy full participatory political rights. The peculiar status of women was formally recognized with Pericles' citizenship law of 451 BC. Up to this time citizens had only to be the offspring of an Athenian father. By the law of Pericles, henceforth both parents had to be Athenian, and subsequently it was necessary to establish women's status.

Political status was conceived and arranged in relation to the central category of the citizen, whose qualities were implied in the imperfections of others. Nevertheless, as the Greeks well knew, groups are not articulated only in terms of political status. Other criteria play their part in the dynamics of group activity, notably wealth and birth. We expect too much if we ask that all social categories map onto one another precisely. An Athenian metic might have been wealthy, but he had no political rights. A native Athenian woman might have been well born, even in practical matters powerful and influential, but she still suffered the political disadvantages of her gender. A poor Athenian might have been able to vote, but had less political influence and access to luxury than a prominent metic courtesan, such as Diotima, who supposedly instructed Socrates about the nature of love (*Symposium* 201d). A child of the right family might, despite his immaturity, even have political influence through indulgent parents: so Themistocles could joke that his son indirectly

controlled all of Greece, because he ruled his mother, who ruled Themistocles, who ruled Athens, which ruled Greece (Plutarch, *Themistocles* 18).

It may well be that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," as Marx and Engels claimed at the beginning of the *Communist Manifesto*; certainly class differences loom large in the accounts of ancient Greek authors. It has nevertheless proved surprisingly difficult to describe with precision their operations within Athenian society. There is of course no question that the population of Athens was economically stratified. With his reforms Solon defined a class system toward the beginning of the sixth century, comprised in descending order of Pentakosiomedminoi, Hippeis, Zeugitai, and Thetes. The system survived into the fifth century: in 458 BC the archonship was thrown open to the Zeugitai (*Athenaiōn Politeia* 26), which shows that the Thetes at this time still suffered from political discrimination. The Solonian classes continued to have relevance to certain religious activities, though they had lost their political significance by the latter part of the fifth century. All through the classical period, however, the wealthy continued to be politically conspicuous in their performance of liturgies: members of the economic elite were assigned to pay for certain expensive state-sponsored activities, such as the outfitting of a warship or the production of a drama. J.K. Davies (1971 and 1984) has argued that perhaps only 1,000 or 2,000 Athenians had fortunes sufficient to pay for such activities; the "liturgical class" therefore may have been as small as 2 or 3 percent of the total citizen population. Even so, in Thucydides' Funeral Oration Pericles argues that in Athens class distinctions are irrelevant: "advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity; class considerations are not allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way: if a man is able to serve the state he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition" (2.37). The statement represents an ideal. The contempt of the wealthy for the poor is illustrated in authors from the Old Oligarch to Plato. The hostility of the poor toward the rich is abundantly illustrated in the speeches of the fourth-century orators.

Birth status was similarly important in ancient Athens, though it is even more difficult to define it or map its social effects. Ancient authors recognized a birth-elite, describing its members as *eugenēs* ("well born") or *kaloi kai agathoi* ("beautiful and good"). Birth status did not necessarily coincide with other criteria of prestige, such as wealth: the "well born" are not necessarily the same as the wealthy, and many of the wealthy in Athens were not "well born." The most obvious criterion of "good birth" was membership in *genos* (a hereditary religious association: see below). In the archaic period birth-status was an index of political privilege; in the classical period the correlation had evaporated.

Civic Religion

In the modern world we practice religion in specialized institutions – churches – overseen by trained professionals. No comparable arrangements existed in the ancient world. There was no vocational ministry: priests were recruited from the general population, or from particular families; in neither case did priests receive specialist training. Likewise much ancient religious observance was civic, which is to say that religious and political orders were integrated. This connection is apparent in the

constitution of the various worshiping groups, which coincided with the organization of the political order, ranging from the entire political society to its smaller subdivisions; at the same time these groups were independent economic entities. Among the more important functions of group religious activity is the manifestation of the group to itself: the acknowledgment in the action of communal belonging. Through ostentatious participation religious activity contributes to community solidarity – or, when activity is articulated in smaller groups, it can promote social tension.

The association of state and worship is attested in the political codification of religious observances. The earliest known sacrificial code in Athens dates to the archaic period and was traditionally associated with the name of the lawgiver Solon. We know that it was publicly displayed into the classical period. This "Solonian" code was revised and re-displayed at the end of the fifth century by decree of the state, on the initiative of a certain Nikomachos. This "Nikomachean revision" of the state's religious code is mentioned in literary sources (notably Lysias 30), and fragments of its inscriptional display have been discovered in the excavations of the Athenian agora.

The entire community participated in many of the great religious festivals of Athens, and the organization of participants mirrored the categories of "political society." At the festival of the Panathenaea almost the entire Athenian population turned out to parade and sacrifice. They were organized according to political status: young women carried a garment they had woven to the Acropolis to dedicate to Athena; citizen males, organized according to military age categories, including for example adolescents, mature men, and the superannuated elderly, accompanied them in a grand procession from the city's gate in the Kerameikos to the Acropolis. Resident aliens, or metics, had their places in the proceedings, and a late source (Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca* 1.242.3) even claims that freedmen and barbarians participated. At the Great Dionysia Athenians and metics marched in the procession to the theatre that marked the beginning of the festival; members of the classical empire brought their tribute and colonies sent symbols of their subordination; some of the performances, notably the twenty tribal choruses of adults and young men, observed and reinforced administrative and age discriminations among the male political citizens; the audience was seated according to civic category.

At crucial moments of life, transition from one status to another was mediated by religious observance, initiation rites. By such observances individuals are assimilated to society and status-boundaries articulated. In the earliest initiation rites, for example, gender differentiation was not observed. At the Amphidromia fathers acknowledged their newborn babies, both male and female, by picking them up and carrying them around the family altar. Their status was witnessed when the father presented his child to his *phrateres* and offered the sacrifice called the *meion*. At about the age of 5 children were given their first taste of wine on one of the days of the spring festival of the Anthesteria: once more, both boys and girls participated in this festival, but future adult gender roles were evoked in the images painted on the little wine bottles used in this ceremony.

In subsequent initiation rites children were segregated by gender. For girls, an exemplary, if aristocratic, sequence of rituals is described in an often cited passage from the *Lysistrata* (641–7): "When I reached the age of 7 I straightaway became an *arrēphoros*; then at 10 I became a grain grinder [*aletris*] for the goddess; after that, wearing a yellow shift, I was a bear at Brauron. And once as a lovely child I bore the

basket [was *kanēphoros*], wearing a chain of figs.'' The rituals alluded to in this passage are concerned with fertility. For example, girls went to ''play the bear'' at Artemis' sanctuary at Brauron, on the east coast of Attica, at about the time of the onset of menstruation, and later, after childbirth, they might dedicate birthing rags and swaddling wraps in her sanctuary on the Acropolis in Athens. If female initiation rituals centered on fertility, those of males emphasized warfare. In early adolescence boys were initiated into the phratries at the sacrifice of the *koureiōn*, or ''shearing.'' A year or two later, in ceremonies involving oaths and sacrifices, they became ephebes, soldiers in training, and at 18 they were admitted to the army and deme membership.

In religious activities women sometimes achieved an unusual freedom and autonomy. Certain religious festivals, such as the Thesmophoria and various Dionysiac observances, were restricted to women. Details are elusive: the Athenians regarded them as sacred mysteries and even authors like Aristophanes, who wrote a play called the *Thesmophoriazusae* (''Women Celebrating the Thesmophoria''), are careful to provide no particulars. Late sources typically suggest (and modern scholars plausibly guess) that such rites dealt with the related questions of human and agricultural fertility. In ancient Athens, women were ideally to be kept sequestered from public view. In the Funeral Oration, Thucydides has Pericles tell women that they paradoxically achieve the greatest renown when they are least talked about, for good or ill (2.45.2). Though female sequestration was a social ideal, it is debatable to what extent it was ever achieved. At religious festivals like the Thesmophoria women not only acted without male supervision, they organized the rituals themselves. Male anxieties about what went on at such celebrations – doubtless drinking and orgiastic sex – were commonplace; nowhere are they more fluently expressed than in Euripides' *Bacchae*, a play about the disastrous attempts of a king (Pentheus) to subordinate female celebration of Dionysiac rites to political regulation. Certain religious cults, particularly those of goddesses, were in the charge of priestesses, who by virtue of their positions sometimes came to have an unusual prominence. In Aristophanes' famous war-protest play, the *Lysistrata*, the title character supposedly leads Athenian women in a sex-strike to bring an end to the Peloponnesian War; ''Lysistrata'' may perhaps be a pseudonym for the famous contemporary priestess Lysimache, who was for over sixty years priestess of the chief goddess of the city, Athena Polias.

Resident non-citizens had a special importance at the annual festival of Heracles at the gymnasium at Kynosarges, not coincidentally the place where the Athenian Polemarch held court in cases regarding metics. Even more interesting are the rare instances in which the state allowed resident aliens the privilege of worshiping their gods in Athens: so merchants from Kition on Cyprus were allowed to establish a shrine of Aphrodite, as were Egyptians of Isis (*IG* ii^2 337), and most famously Thracians were permitted to celebrate rituals of Bendis (e.g. Plato, *Republic* 327a). Such license amounted to a political ''naturalization'' of the cult groups: they were allowed to own land and build on Athenian soil, privileges normally restricted to citizens. And as we see notably at the beginning of Plato's *Republic*, citizens subsequently might participate in these ''alien'' religious observances.

With a very few exceptions, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries, slaves were not allowed to participate in civic ritual. The festival of Cronus (the Kronia), provides the notable exception: here ''fathers of families fed on the already harvested grains and fruits here and there with their slaves; with them they endured the suffering of work in

cultivating the fields'' (Philochoros, *FGrH* 328 fr. 97). This inversion of political status is exceptional, yet it finds parallels in many other ancient cities, the most famous example being the Saturnalia at Rome. Current consensus holds that reversal of roles was not socially subversive; the Kronia was sanctioned by the civic social order and had the paradoxical function of supporting conventional social hierarchy.

Other criteria than political status figure in civic religious celebrations: the most important are economic class and birth status. In his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, Karl Marx said that religion was ''the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people.'' He meant that people are divided along economic lines, and these ''classes'' are always necessarily in competition with one another. Religion he saw as a palliative, which works to disguise the reality of economic oppression: it teaches and persuades the poor to suffer by dangling before them the prospect of a reward in heaven. The Athenians of the classical period boasted – accurately in my view – that class and birth carried with them no legitimate political preferences; they did, however, guarantee certain religious privileges. Priests and other prominent participants in rites were frequently chosen by virtue of the fact that they were ''well born'': certain hereditary associations purporting to be families (*genē*) monopolized the priesthoods of various cults (see below). To take another notable case, each year four girls were chosen by the ''king'' archon on the basis of ''excellence of birth'' as ''bearers of the sacred secret objects'' (these are the *arrhēphoroi*). The garment paraded to Athena on the Acropolis during the Panathenaea was woven by two of these girls, along with a team of workers (*ergastinai*), also ''well born''; all these enjoyed a prominent position in the procession. To take another example, at the festival of the Oschophoria, a festival that among other things commemorated the deeds of Theseus on Crete, two young men, ''chosen from those outstanding in birth and wealth'' (Istros *FGrH* 334 fr. 8), conveyed the *ōschoi* (vine shoots with bunches of grapes) in a procession.

Urban versus Rural Religion

The Athenian state, like our own, was articulated for administrative purposes into smaller groups, including (from larger to smaller) ten tribes, thirty trittyes, and about 139 rural villages, called demes. These groups functioned not only to organize citizens' participation in the state, but also communities; and part of communal life was religious observance. Demes seem to have engendered a particularly vivid sense of community among their members, and there is substantial evidence for religious practice within them.

Every Greek polis was composed of an urban center and a surrounding countryside, and the tension between the two is manifested by a corresponding tension between central and local religious observance. In the case of Athens, the surrounding countryside was occupied by numerous demes, some of which were of considerable size and antiquity. The settlements were, by the reforms of Cleisthenes (508/7 BC or soon after), integrated and subordinated to the state. These demes offered the environment of small cities to their inhabitants, who often felt greater allegiance to them than to the general state. Thucydides, in his description of the

evacuation of the rural population into the protection of the urban center's walls during the Peloponnesian War, remarks that refugees "were depressed and took it hard because they were abandoning their houses and the ancestral sanctuaries which they had possessed from the time of the ancient political order [i.e., from times before the Cleisthenic reforms], and because they were about to change their way of life, and each was abandoning nothing other than his own city" (2.16). The cults observed in the countryside were of considerable antiquity, some antedating even the establishment of the villages themselves (cf. the description of the rustic rites of Pan at the beginning of Menander's *Dyskolos*). The immense variety of rural religious observance can be sampled from the five surviving sacred calendars of demes.

Cleisthenes' reforms may be seen as a successful response to the regional factions that bedeviled Athens for much of the seventh and sixth centuries. Nevertheless, the continued existence of rural groups such as demes posed a threat to the unity of the state. The local particularism of Attic religious observance was, as the quote from Thucydides suggests, perhaps the most significant force working against the coherence of the population of the state. Certain persistent regional and religious associations of these villages, such as the Marathonian Tetrapolis, were more or less overtly opposed to the Cleisthenic order.

Most of the famous state cults and festivals were celebrated only at the urban center: if residents of distant demes wanted to participate they had to travel. Distance may be seen as either a factor in consolidation (demesmen are integrated because forced to come to Athens) or in fragmentation (demesmen are excluded because they cannot come to Athens). Certain celebrations, however, notably those concerned with women and families, such as the Dionysiac festivals, were recapitulated in city and countryside. This reduplication is difficult to understand as anything but a concession to the limits of the social solidarity of the rural population of the state. Furthermore a host of peculiar divinities were worshiped in the countryside, but not in the city. The divisive effects of rural worship find some confirmation in attempts, notably in the sixth century, associated perhaps with the Pisistratids, as well as at other times, to consolidate religious observance in the city by reduplicating rural sanctuaries in central urban places, or even by moving entire shrines to the city.

Two of the more important religious institutions in ancient Athens were the phratries and *genē* (singular *genos*). These may originally have been constituent parts of the political state, analogous to tribes and demes, as Fragment 3 of the Aristotelian *Athenaiōn Politeia* evidently suggests. Both groups presented themselves as kinship organizations: the word phratry means "brotherhood" and the term *genos* (often translated "clan") suggests a group affiliated by birth. In the classical period membership in both was hereditary. It was long thought that these organizations developed out of earlier tribal and familial groupings. Present scholarly consensus, however, holds that these groups were in origin political organizations that promoted an ideology of genetic political affiliation: all Athenians were "brothers."

All Athenians were members of phratries, which served as gatekeepers of citizenship. Admission to a phratry entailed acknowledgment of parentage, and so was tantamount to acceptance into the community of the Athenians. Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451/0 BC seems to be implemented through the phratries, and in the fourth century phratry membership was commonly used as evidence of disputed civic status. It is significant, then, that phratry religious observance was highly (though not

entirely) homogeneous. While phratries might worship gods appropriate to their regional and mythic situations, all seem to have cultivated Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratria, as well as Apollo Patrōos: thus the significance of one of the questions posed to Athenian archons when appointed: "Where is your shrine of Apollo Patrōos?" (*Athenaiōn Politeia* 55).

Genē, by contrast, did not include all Athenians, and by the classical period and doubtless before membership in a *genos* was synonymous with being "well born." Many, if not all, *genē* had the prerogative of furnishing religious leadership to certain city cults: a given *genos* typically provided the priest or priestess of a civic cult out of its membership. These cults may or may not originally have been restricted to the *genos*. So the Eteoboutadai, for example, claimed descent from the legendary kings of Attica and provided the priestess of the cult of Athena Polias and the priest of Poseidon Erechtheus. By contrast, the *genos* of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the Gephyraioi, evidently kept only private cult and shrines (Herodotus 5.57–61).

Extra-Political Religious Associations

Many groups besides the state sponsored religious rituals, and, as the Greeks well knew, such religious fragmentation had the potential to nourish conflict. The most elementary and persistent group within society is the family. Since at least the time of Aristotle the family has been seen as the foundation of human community; but as has likewise been noted since at least the time of Aeschylus, family allegiance is an ever-present danger to the solidarity of the larger political order. Moral and religious obligations to the family may conflict with duty to the state. In the *Laws*, Plato notoriously urged that family cults should be entirely subordinated to those of the state: "let nobody possess shrines in private houses; whenever anyone is disposed to sacrifice let him go to the public shrines" (*Laws* 909d–910e). Typically family religious rites were observed, for example, at childbirth and marriage, or in connection with farming. The most prominent and socially explosive religious duty of families, however, was their responsibility to the dead. Sophocles in his *Antigone* has left the most famous statement: there the eponymous character is faced with the dilemma of her duty to obey state decree and leave her traitorous brothers to lie dead on the field of battle as carrion for dogs and birds, or obey her familial duty and give them burial. The state attempted to regulate mourning; female lamentation was considered especially dangerous.

Some have attempted to make sense of the welter of Athenian religious groups by insisting on a basic distinction between obligatory and voluntary groups. Membership in certain organizations that practiced ritual, including tribes and demes, *genē* and phratries, and even the nuclear family, was obligatory for Athenians: by the classical period membership was inherited: "opting out" of civic religion amounted to "opting out" of the state and family – a patent impossibility. It was possible, however, to join (or to refuse to join) other cultic organizations; as a consequence it has sometimes been argued that such groups satisfied a spiritual need unrequited by civic religion. Most notable among such associations are *thiasoi* and *orgeōnes*. The word *thiasos* refers originally to a Dionysiac association. The group name *orgeōnes* derives from the word for cultic ritual, *orgia*. These groups, though best attested in

the hellenistic period, certainly existed from at least the sixth century, and probably earlier. In the classical period it is difficult to discern the nature of the constituency of such groups; in the hellenistic period they show great variety in their composition: some included citizens, others women, metics, craftsmen, even slaves; some had mixed memberships. Some approximated to trade unions, others to burial clubs.

Conclusion

The issue of the relationship of society and religion is a modern problem, one legacy of Christianity to modern scholarship – which is not to say that we should not pose the question of the ancient Greeks. For the Greeks the comparable but not identical problem had to do, rather, with the coherence of political life, of which religion was an integral part. The general coherence of religion with ancient "political society" is manifest; but it is equally obvious that religious observance provides ample scope for conflict as well. Religion is part of society, but it is a dynamic and its impulses may or may not be consonant with prevailing social structures.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For the coherence of society and religion see Durkheim 1912; for further assessment and a survey of other work pertaining to religion and society, see (e.g.) M. Hamilton 2001 (109–21 on Durkheim). On Greek religion and society see generally Sourvinou-Inwood 1988b, 1990, and Parker 1996 and 2005. For religious utopianism and the *City of God* see Deane 1973 and Wolin 2004:86–114. For religious activism in America see Corbett and Corbett 1999. For the history of the idea of society see Mayhew 1968–79. For the history of sociology see Goudsblom and Heilbron 2001. On science and religion, see Ferngren 2002. For the problem of the relationship between orders of knowledge and socio-political orders in ancient Greece see Ober 1998. For the exceptional nature of Athens see Brock and Hodkinson 2003.

For philosophers and religion in general, see Burkert 1985:305–37. For the "embedded" concept of society and economy see Austin and Vidal-Naquet 1977:3–28. For Herodotus and religion see Mikalson 2003; for Thucydides on religion, see Hornblower 1992. For the history of the idea of politics see Meier 1990, and for social contract theory see, e.g., Levin 1973.

My account of Athenian society relies chiefly on Aristotle's discussion in the *Politics*: see Hedrick 1994. On the family see Patterson 1998; on Greek slaves, Garlan 1988 and Vidal-Naquet 1986:159–67; on metics, Whitehead 1977; on children, Golden 1990 and Neils and Oakley 2003. For the Citizenship Law of Pericles see Boegehold 1993, and for citizens see Manville 1990. For class and birth status, see Ober 1989:192–292 and for the "liturgical class" see Davies 1971, 1984.

For group worship as performative see various writings by Victor Turner, e.g. 1974. For general treatments of Athenian festivals see Deubner 1932 and Parke 1977. For priesthoods, ancient and modern, see Burkert 1985:95–8. For the Athenian religious codes, see Parker 1996:43–55, 218–20. For the Panathenaea see Neils 1996; for the Greater Dionysia see the various essays collected in Winkler and Zeitlin 1990, particularly that by Winkler and that co-authored by Ober and Strauss; for the Anthesteria and Choes see R. Hamilton 1992; for Brauron see Faraone 2003, and for dedications to Artemis of Brauron on the Acropolis see Linders 1972. For ephebes see Vidal-Naquet 1986:106–28. For the Thesmophoria see Winkler

1990a:188–209. On Lysistrata and Lysimache see Lewis 1955. For Kynosarges and metics see Humphreys 1974. For Bendis, Isis, and Aphrodite, see Jones 1999:42–3, 259–62. For slaves and the Kronia see Garlan 1988:198–9.

For urban versus rural in general see the books by N.F. Jones, including 1987, 1999 and 2004. For demes see Whitehead 1986 (with deme calendars at 185–207). For rural religious associations see Lewis 1963; for the urban and rural recapitulation of festivals see Henrichs 1990. For the centralization of cults, see Hedrick 1988, esp. 207. On phratries and *genē* see the concise statements at Parker 1996:56–66, 104–8, and 284–327, as well as Jones 1999:195–220, 242–9.

For lamentation see Alexiou 1974, Humphreys 1983, and, more recently, the various essays in Lardinois and McClure 2001.

The bibliography on the "voluntary associations" is far out of date. The standard overview is by Poland 1909. Ferguson 1944 is a fine essay on the *orgeōnes*. The best recent resources are Jones 1999:307–10 and Parker 1996:333–42.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Women, Religion, and the Home

Janett Morgan

> for it is the custom for all women especially . . . to dedicate whatever is near and to vow sacrifices and to promise shrines for the gods and daemons and children of the gods . . . And they fill all the houses and all the towns with altars and shrines, setting them up both in open spaces and wherever these happenings occur
>
> (Plato, *Laws* 909e–910a)

Uncovering evidence of private female lives is a notoriously difficult task. The subjects of "women" and "home" are not of enormous interest to ancient authors. As a result, the views that texts offer us are tantalizingly incomplete. Who are the women referred to by Plato in the passage above? What form did their domestic shrines take? Textual narratives raise more questions than they answer. Yet if we turn to material sources for enlightenment, we face a similar wall of invisibility. We can view the detritus of life, including religious artifacts, in the wells and on the floors of houses, but we cannot link artifacts to female users or identify specific patterns of female behavior in the material record. Similarly, whilst domestic excavations have unearthed an array of female images in the form of statuettes or on vases, many of which show women performing religious acts, we cannot use this evidence to ask or answer specific questions. We do not know whether the scenes are set in a house or temple. We cannot understand what meaning the images had for the householder. We cannot say what type of woman, free or slave, respectable or marginal, is performing the acts. The images are generic, showing exempla of female behavior, not realities (S. Lewis 2002). We are left with a tangled web of images and ideas. How do we begin to unravel the relationship between women, religion, and the home?

Controlling Women

Our evidence for female private lives is fragmentary: sources offer us only broken artifacts spread across decaying houses and small snippets of information gleaned from wider narratives. It is no surprise that most modern investigations into women and religion take a wide ambit. Dillon's study *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* offers an invaluable collection of information on female religious practices viewed across a wide spectrum of communities and chronological periods (Dillon

2002). This kind of investigative approach offers us the chance to compare and contrast the religious behavior of women in different times and places. Yet it carries an implicit danger: in gathering a wide range of information we run the risk of homogenizing female religious behavior. No matter how carefully and cautiously we present our research, when we cast with a wide net we cannot avoid gathering women together, masking the wide range of age groups and social backgrounds that the term "women" is capable of containing (Katz 1995). We risk grouping together mistress and slave, matron and maiden, without discrimination. The final result is a composite picture of female lives which ignores the differences that place, time, social status, and political system can bring to religious experiences.

One solution to this problem is for us to control our investigation by directing it at a specific group of women. The obvious candidates are the women of classical and early hellenistic Athens, a place and time for which we have a substantial body of information accumulated from material and textual sources. Yet in doing this, we run into three problems. First, we must accept that we cannot understand the religious lives of all women in the community; we can only see the women that our sources allow us to. As a result our view will be skewed. Even within a single community, women's religious experiences and behavior can be very different. Financial considerations will dictate not only the roles played by women in a family but also the quality and range of materials used for religious acts. Social position can influence the ability of an individual to participate in ritual occasions, as well as affecting the tenor of the whole experience. Our study will never fully reflect the variety of experiences that must have existed.

Secondly, our ability to investigate female religious behavior in the private sphere will be constrained by the quality of our sources. Most evidence for the religious lives of women focuses on their actions in the public sphere: we have little evidence for practices in the home. When references to women and domestic life do appear in texts, they are tangential to wider narratives: again, our view is skewed rather than direct. Even where we do stumble across a description of private female worship, we have no idea how it fits into a wider context of women's religious behavior. Menander's description of a mother worshiping at a domestic shrine offers us no clue as to whether the scene reflects a common or exceptional practice; it is the only example that we have (*Ghost* 49–56). Equally, we do not know how far Menander and other authors exaggerate female behavior to suit the needs of their narrative.

Our third problem is one of perspective: the view that our sources offer us comes through male eyes. As Plato's comments at the start of this chapter show, women are narrative tools in the hands of an author. They become visible in our sources when their lives or religious behavior reflect or reinforce male ideology (Just 1989:2–4). How far a man could understand or represent female life is a matter of some debate (Cartledge 1993:65). We must accept the possibility that we may be viewing an ideal of female life and that the view offered to us by texts has little bearing on the day-to-day existence of women. Most Athenian texts divide women into two clean and clear categories: the good citizen wife and the rest. Citizen wives are expected to be modest and invisible, not to draw attention to themselves (Salmenkivi 1997:186–7). They should be like Andromache, wife of Hector, who records how she led a modest life, avoiding the gossip of women and pleasing her husband (Euripides, *Trojan*

Women 645–56). The good citizen wife stays indoors. Women who deviate from this behavior are stereotyped as frightening and unnatural, like Clytemnestra and Medea, or they are viewed as "outside" of normal gender relations, like *hetairas* such as Aspasia (Blundell 1995:148, 172–80).

Yet our acceptance of the citizen wife as an ideal projection does not undermine or vitiate the image of female lives offered by ancient sources. As Katz points out, these images must have made sense in a cultural context (1995:30). Oratory, tragedy, and comedy were all written for public performance and appraisal. The pictures of women that they offer must reflect and reinforce the views of the society that produced them. Citizen wives, irrespective of differences in social and financial status, played a vitally important role for Athens in ensuring a steady supply of future citizens; they were also an essential component in the ideology of the home. In order to understand the images of private female religious behavior that appear in Athenian textual sources, we must engage more directly with the male representation of female lives. We must explore the religious occasions where citizen wives become visible and how their behavior reflects or reinforces the ideology of texts. We must seek to understand how the relationship between the citizen wife and the house articulates female religious behavior in public and also in private contexts.

A Woman's Place

Male Athenian writers and modern classical scholars locate the citizen wife firmly in the home. She is presented as a creature of the dark, enclosed, interior space, whose life and interests are intrinsically tied to house and household (Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 7.22; Keuls 1985:82–112; Pomeroy 1975:78–84). Her life contrasts with that of her husband: men are creatures of the public sphere, active and visible in the public places of the city. The family home is the focus and limit of a citizen wife's existence and she leaves it only with her husband's permission (Schaps 1998:169). In comedies, the speeches of women affirm the link between citizen wife and home. In Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Calonice states that it is not easy for women to get out of the house (16), while in his *Thesmophoriazusae* the female Chorus observes the anger of men at finding their wives have left the house (794–5). An unnamed male character in a fragmentary passage by Menander notes explicitly that for a freeborn wife the street door should be the customary limit of her world (Menander fr. 815 K-A).

The connection between wife and home reflects the fear of men, their need to control women in order to ensure legitimate offspring and to protect the wealth of the family (Cohen 1991:140–1; Ogden 1996:100–6). Yet the home also offers protection to the citizen wife: men may move freely into and out of the house but women do so only at a cost to their reputation. In a forensic speech by Lysias, the defendant Euphiletos is careful to place the blame for his wife's seduction firmly on the shoulders of the dead Eratosthenes in order to eliminate queries about the paternity of his son (Lysias 1). Gravestones in the Kerameikos show women with their families or performing activities that indicate a domestic setting. The home offers a symbolic stage on which to idealize female behavior: the citizen wives on gravestones engage in activities commensurate with the ideology of a citizen

wife. Hegeso examines her jewelry (National Museum Athens 3624), Polyxena bids farewell to her child (NMA 723) and Archippe stands in the background as father and son bid farewell (NMA 737). The women are modestly clothed and wear veils.

The two key features of the relationship between women and home, its role as female stage and place of protection, may help to explain the occasions where women's ritual action becomes visible in the domestic context. Texts indicate that women could use the roof of the house as a ritual space. At the festival of the Adonia, women and girls mourned the death of the youth Adonis. They grew gardens in honor of Adonis, which withered and died in the heat (Plato, *Phaedrus* 276B). The Adonia could be celebrated by all women, whether maiden or mother, citizen wife or *hetaira*. Indeed in Menander's *Samian Woman* (35–50), we find the women of two households, citizen and *hetaira*, celebrating together. It is a private celebration and its principal activities are intimately linked to the roof. A vase painting by the Meidias Painter depicts women celebrating the Adonia; one of the assembled women climbs a ladder to place a pot holding plants onto the roof (Dillon 2002: fig. 5.7). Women also feast, dance, and shout on the roofs of their houses. Although the behavior of the magistrate in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* suggests that the noise and activities of the festival may have irritated men, there is no indication that Demostratus' wife is acting irresponsibly as she shouts and dances on her roof (387–96). For the duration of the celebration women are audible and visible within the city, yet their behavior, while contradicting the ideology of the demure and silent wife, is socially acceptable.

The choice of the roof as a location is curious as there is little in the story of the life and death of Adonis to explain this. Adonis is associated with youth, love, and untimely death (Burkert 1985:176–7). His setting is the natural world, not the homes of men. The use of the roof may be related to ritual action, practical requirements, or socio-cultural needs rather than to mythology. In terms of ritual action, the placement of the gardens on the roof may be designed to facilitate their demise: the heat of the sun on the roof by day might cause the plants to wither and die more quickly. In practical terms, the roof may have presented the largest space within the house, making it particularly suitable for the needs of a party. The passage in Menander's *Samian Woman* indicates that feasting and dancing took place at night; the roof may have offered a cooler and more suitable place for feasting and dancing in the evening than a small, overheated court (45–6).

For the purposes of this investigation, however, it is the connection between the loud female behavior and the roof that is most interesting. The house roof is a space that is open and visible and yet has restricted access. This means that women on the roof can be visible in the city and yet separated from it (Winkler 1990b:191). For Menander, the celebration of the Adonia presents an ideal occasion for seduction; a vulnerable young girl is seduced by a neighbor's son and made pregnant (*Samian Woman* 35–50). At the Adonia festival the women are possessed by their grief: their vulnerability derives from their state of religious ecstasy. The use of the roof offers protection to the women. They can drink, make noise, and lose their self-control whilst retaining the protection of the home. They can become visible and audible without coming out into the city.

The connection between female visibility, female protection, and the roof of the house is not limited solely to the festival of the Adonia. In Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, Antigone climbs to the roof of the palace to view the Argive army; yet she is

careful not to be seen and returns to her private rooms within the house after the event (88–201). Spying on an army of men is not a suitable reason for a young girl to become visible; she must stay out of sight whilst on the roof. In Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, when Dicaeopolis wishes to begin his festival, he sends his wife up to the roof to watch (262). She may not participate directly but may become visible and participate indirectly from the safety of the roof. The value of the roof as a vantage point and visible stage is illustrated in its use by the female servants of a household, who climb to the roof to alert passers-by to an attack taking place within a neighboring house (Demosthenes 48.60). The evidence from these occasions and from the Adonia reflects the male ideology linking women to the house. It shows women participating in a religious celebration in a way that reinforces the textual connection between women, appropriate behavior, and the home.

Hearth and Home

The citizen wife is not only *in* the home but also, in a symbolic sense, she *is* the home: her presence defines the domestic context. Athenian texts have no clear term to express the idea of house or home. Characters refer to the place where they and their family reside as a *domos*, a *tegos*, or an *oikos* or they refer to their *hestia*, the family hearth. The word *domos* simply means a built environment, a man-made edifice. It can be used to refer to a non-domestic building such as a temple or to refer to a single room within a building (Aristophanes, *Clouds* 303, and *Ecclesiazusae* 11). The word *tegos* refers to the space under a roof (Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 492–5). The last term, *oikos*, famously encompasses the family and all its possessions, including the places that they own or live in (Menander, *Samian Woman* 133; Demosthenes 44.2, 47.19.5). Yet again, an *oikos* can also refer to a temple, a single room, or buildings on a farm (Osborne 1985:121). This indicates that the meaning of a building comes not from the term used to describe it but from the individuals who use it and the manner in which they use it. No permanence attaches to the notion of home; it can change or move as the occupants of a building change or as death changes the dynamics of the family (Foxhall 2000). The citizen wife therefore plays a vital role in the ideology of "home." The wife's presence defines the home and locates the family. A good wife guards the stores and protects the wealth and future of the family group (Euripides, *Melanippe Desmotis* fr. 494.9–11 *TrGF*; Page 1941:112–15).

As the home is defined by the presence of the citizen wife, it too is female. Authors constantly use the analogy of the female body to describe the home and to indicate its vulnerability. In the speech *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (Lysias 1.4), Euphiletos equates the sexual penetration of his wife by Eratosthenes with the physical entry of this adulterer through his door and into his house. A similar theme of intrusion and dishonor appears in his *Against Simon*, where men burst into the presence of the innocent young female relatives of the speaker (Lysias 3.6–8). Again, in Demosthenes' *Against Evergus and Mnesibulus* the intruders burst open the door and come into the presence of a wife and children (Demosthenes 49.53–7). The act of bursting through the front door constituted more than a mere trespass; it was an act of penetration and hubris. The door and the dark interior of the house are described

as vulnerable to an aggressive entry, as is a woman (Padel 1983:8). Tales of men entering the house without permission use a terminology that implies the occurrence of a sexual act or a rape (Henderson 1975:137–8). Women are symbolically as well as ideologically tied to the house. The link between house, female sexuality, and female respectability is played upon by Theophrastus, whose character "the Slanderous Man" outlines the shame of a house that allows access to all from the street without discretion: its legs are raised, ready for sex (*Characters* 28.3).

The symbolic connection between female body and house and the importance of the citizen wife in defining "home" can help us to understand the connection between women and the hearth, the religious focus of family life. The hearth is also female; it is the sacred site of its eponymous goddess Hestia, a mysterious and shadowy goddess. She is one of the twelve Olympian gods represented by Pheidias on the Parthenon frieze, but has very little mythology. We know only from her appearance in the *Homeric Hymns* that she is a virgin goddess who rejected marriage to remain at the center of house and temple and receive the greatest honor from men (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 21–32). As the sacred hearth she plays a vitally important role in defining the community and its constituent groups. Access to the temple hearth defines the sacrificial group, access to the hearth in the Prytaneion at Athens defines the members of the city and its political officers, and access to the domestic hearth defines the family (Miller 1978; Vernant 1983). Hestia is inseparable from the hearth: when Euripides' Alcestis prays to the hearth to take care of her family after her death, she prays to both goddess and artifact, as deity and also as the divine symbol of family (*Alcestis* 158–69).

Without hearth and wife there is no family (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Spartans* 9.5.7–8). The female hearth and the citizen wife are synonymous with the fertility of the ancestral line. As family members die and are born or married, the changes in membership of the family group are recognized and articulated by rituals connected with the hearth. At the *amphidromia* the family feasts in celebration of a birth while at the *perideipnon* they reaffirm their relationships with each other, taking into account the changes in family dynamics with the loss of a member (Garland 1985; R. Hamilton 1984). New members of the family, whether bride or slave, are initiated by a ritual called the *katachysmata* (Aristophanes, *Wealth* 768; Oakley and Sinos 1993). They are pelted with fruits, nuts, and fertility symbols while seated at the household hearth. As the hearth articulates family changes, it stands as a symbol of the family itself and the continuation of the family line, as does the citizen wife. Orestes and Electra are described as saviors of their father's hearth (Aeschylus, *Choephoroe* 264). Dinarchus refers to the shame of a traitor on facing his ancestral hearth, using the hearth as a means to convey the depth of betrayal; it hits at the very core of the family (*Demosthenes* 66).

The hearth plays a vital role in defining home and family, yet hearths are noticeable in classical and hellenistic Athenian houses only for their absence. While many formal built hearths are present in the classical houses at Olynthus, only one formal hearth has been found in an Athenian house (Shear 1973:147–50). Jameson suggests that the appearance of the hearth in Athenian tragic plays is an archaism, designed to reflect a time when the royal hearth was a symbol of power and legitimate rule rather than any contemporary hearth in the classical house (1990:106). Yet a clearer explanation for its textual importance can be found in the role of hearth and wife as

symbol of the family. Both hearth and wife locate the family; they reflect and ensure its continuity. The link between them is utilized by playwrights to create fearful images of female behavior and the perversion of normal familial ties. Medea kills her brother at the hearth (Euripides, *Medea* 133) while Clytemnestra makes nightly offerings to the Furies, female spirits of vengeance, at her hearth (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 106–9). These women use the hearth for personal gain; their actions divide rather than unite the family. The connection between women, hearth, and fertility further allows playwrights to create parodies and images of a more sexual nature: as with the concept of home, the hearth is intimately linked to the female body. Clytemnestra's statement "as long as Aegisthus lights the fire on my hearth" offers a highly sexualized image of her appropriation of the symbol of rule and perversion of the normal process of royal heredity (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1435). Similarly, Sophocles has Agamemnon thrust his staff into the center of the hearth of the Atreidae in order to bring his revenge: the result is Orestes and Electra, child saviors of his hearth (*Electra* 419–21). Aristophanes uses a range of links between hearths and fire to express ideas of male sexual penetration or refer to female genitalia to comic effect. In *Peace* Trygaeus refers to keeping a *hetaira* and poking the coals (439–40), while in *Knights* a sex act is referred to as "stirring up the hearths" (1286). The intimate textual connection between citizen wife and cult hearth has less to do with actual religious practices, but can be explained as the result of their shared role as symbols of fertility, the means by which the family line is both defined and perpetuated.

Festivals and Female Movement

Texts do not generally present the life of a citizen wife as a happy one: confined within her house, her movements watched and controlled by her male relatives, she has no political power and little freedom. Modern views about the lives of citizen women often carry an air of pity about them. Detienne's suggestion that women neither ate meat nor shared in public sacrifices essentially condemns women to a silent and invisible life in the house (Detienne 1989b). Even here, Sourvinou-Inwood sees them as powerless and subordinate (1995b:111). The drudgery of their daily lives is mitigated only by participation in religious festivals. As Plato's criticisms at the start of this chapter reveal, women are active and enthusiastic participants in the religious sphere. Religion allows women to break free from domestic constraint. It brings women into the streets of the city and makes them visible. At religious occasions they may meet other women, feast, and enjoy themselves (Lefkowitz and Fant 1992:273; Versnel 1996:187; Zeitlin 1982:129). This view of the relationship between women and festivals is particularly evident in comic writing: Lysistrata complains that women are slow to meet for political reasons but would have come quickly if called to a religious event (Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 1–5). Sostratos notes the zeal with which his mother leaves her house each day to make offerings to the gods in her local district (Menander, *Dyscolus* 259–63).

The comic connection between women and religious festivals reinforces the male ideology that a wife belongs at home. Yet, in examining this ideological projection of women's restricted lives, we must be cautious that we do not allow our own values

and beliefs about the importance of gender equality to interact with the ancient evidence. Goff's investigation into female ritual practices is delivered through a feminist perspective (Goff 2004:20). This type of approach judges the position of women in Athenian society rather than seeking to understand it: it sets their lives against a western model and finds them lacking. Recent studies of women's lives in ancient Greece have pointed out that women do not always seek to cross beyond the boundaries of their socio-cultural environment (Lefkowitz 1996c; Llewellyn-Jones 2003). They are content to carve out roles for themselves within the prevailing social system. An absence of women in textual sources and an ideology that links them to the home does not necessarily mean that the female contribution to society was undervalued, or that women led unhappy lives from which modern scholarship can emancipate them.

Women become especially visible in our textual sources at festivals and rites in honor of Demeter and Dionysus. The festivals of Demeter share certain common features: women separate themselves from men, they perform secret rites, they handle sacred artifacts, and they laugh, blaspheme, or abuse each other (Dillon 2002:109). Unfortunately, our ability to understand the rites performed by women here is constrained by their secret nature and by the lack of contemporary evidence. For most information, we are reliant on the interpretations of much later commentators who struggle to bring sense to the acts allegedly performed by the women (Lowe 1998). As a result, we interpret the actions of women at Demeter festivals through a lens of fertility ritual (Burkert 1985:244; Pomeroy 1975:77; Winkler 1990b:194). Women are the symbols of fertility in the city and perform actions that encourage fecundity in both city and household. At the Thesmophoria women descend into subterranean chambers, remove decayed offerings from the earth, and spread them across altars. They fast while seated on herbs that reduced sexual desire and celebrate birth (Burkert 1985:242–6). Similar rites are performed at other Demeter festivals such as the Stenia, Haloa, and Skira (Dillon 2002:109, 120–4; Winkler 1990b; Zeitlin 1982).

Yet female fertility is not the only explanation for the importance of wives in festivals of Demeter. The Demeter festivals share a common feature in drawing wives out of the house and requiring them to become visible in the city. This movement stands in direct opposition to the textual ideology that locates the wife within the home: for the duration of the festival, wives abandon their houses. The women move out of the house and into the public spaces of the city: in Athens, they camp in the Pnyx (Isaeus 8.18–21; Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* 295–570). Women are not political creatures but they occupy political ground, symbolically assuming the roles of men (Zeitlin 1982:143). In order to understand why, we must focus more closely on the role of the goddess Demeter. While she is a goddess of crops and fertility, agriculture is only one aspect of Demeter's nature. Settlement or civilization and its institutions, including laws and marriage, are all consequences of agriculture (Lowe 1998:155; Zeitlin 1982:138). This is reflected in Demeter's epithets: Thesmophoros, bringer of law, and also Epoikidia, Demeter of the household. Demeter is concerned with the structure of communities and the maintenance of order within them. These concerns are reflected in the behavior of citizen wives at her festivals. In moving out of the house and into public spaces the women dissolve the boundaries between private and public, house and city, family and community:

the traditional order is broken down. In assuming the roles of men, the women also explore and define their own role in the community. The drama of their abandonment of home, their movement out of the house and into the political space of the city, reminds the male city of their importance. Without wives, there is no city and no structure or order in the community. As the women return to their houses, the traditional order is renewed and restored.

A closer examination of the festival calendar reinforces the links between female religious behavior and the ideology of civilization, community, and household. The Stenia and Thesmophoria take place within a short time of each other and both in the month of Pyanepsion (September/October). There are a number of other festivals taking place this month and, while there is a link to agriculture in many of them, there is also a balance of male and female participation (Foxhall 1995:107). The Oschophoria has a procession where two young men wear women's clothes and citizen wives bring the food and serve the meal (Parke 1977:77). At the Pyanepsia, the houses are blessed and marked by the *eiresiōne*, the sacred olive branch, which brings luck to the household for the coming year. At the Apatouria, young male children are enrolled in the political groups of their fathers; they are recognized by the political community. The festivals of this month have themes that are designed to explore and reflect the role of the family and its members in the community. It is a month of change, an opportunity to explore and reassert the social, gender, and age boundaries of the different groups in society, to renew and re-form the community. Women also come out of the house at rites in honor of the god Dionysus (Jameson 1993). Again, their movement is normally explained as an opportunity for women to gain release from the burdens of their lives (Dillon 2002:148). Yet the behavior of the maenad does not offer an excuse for a party, it reinforces the importance of women in their community. The cult of Dionysus is littered with ambiguities. He is an asexual god who is happily married (Jameson 1993). The wine of Dionysus brings madness, yet it also civilizes. Rituals concerned with the sharing of wine cement bonds between social, political, and religious groups (Murray 1990b). Wine libations provide a means to honor the gods, or dishonor the individual when taken to excess. Dionysus can represent destruction but can also create community. As the god comes into the house and draws its women out to the wilds, the boundaries between home and community are broken down. For Seaford (1993) mythical tales of Dionysus and the maenads show that if women fail to follow Dionysus or are prevented by men, Dionysus will destroy their house and family. Yet if they are permitted to dance with the god, the madness of the women will not be a permanent state. As the ecstasy abates, the women return to their homes. The movement away from home reflects the role of Dionysus and women in destroying and building communities: as women move away from the home, family and society collapse; as they return, order and civilization are renewed.

Women cross the path of male writers most vividly on religious occasions where they are required to come out of the house (Demosthenes 55.23–4, 57.30–1; Cohen 1996:140). Their exit from the house is an important part of the ritual; they emerge as a symbol of their household rather than as an individual. The women's religious behavior breaks down the boundaries between city and home, man and woman, human and deity. As they move back into the house at the end of the rituals the community is redefined and order is restored.

Women as Home: Rites of Transition

Women also become visible in our sources at religious rites that change the composition of the family, at births, deaths, and marriages. Women can be central to the rites as bride, mother, or deceased. They can also assist the passage of others through the transition: by bringing a child to birth, marking the passage of the bride across the city, from natal hearth to marital hearth, and by lamenting the dead (Garland 1990:61; Oakley and Sinos 1993:26; Stears 1998). Life-cycle transitions rupture the normal harmony of life. The world becomes a dangerous place: the dead mix with the living, the future of the household is placed in jeopardy as the wife risks death in childbirth and the vulnerable bride, neither girl nor yet wife, walks the streets of the city. Women's religious behavior on these occasions is concerned with restoring harmony: their actions remove the ritual pollution and danger associated with rites of transition. They heal both family and community.

Birth, death, and marriage are intensely private occasions yet they are also of vital importance to the community. Political communities and families both need a supply of babies and they both need order to be restored on death to ensure their survival. This mutual need dissolves the separation between private and public, between house and city. Women must become visible. The body and movements of the citizen wife on these occasions articulates the changes taking place within the family; they also bring those changes into the community and integrate them into the social and ritual landscape. Rituals at birth, death, and marriage therefore follow a similar process, which acknowledges the dependency of household and community while allowing changes in status to occur.

Rites of transition begin in the public sphere. As the symbol of their household, citizen women move out into the community, and their behavior advertises the commencement of the ritual process by bringing private rituals to public attention. At childbirth and before marriage, women come out of the house to make offerings, propitiating deities and seeking a successful resolution to the life-cycle change that they or a family member are approaching (Demand 1994:87, 89; Llewellyn-Jones 2003:219). At birth and marriage women seek to propitiate Artemis for fear of incurring her wrath (Cole 1998). The dependency of household and city on female fertility is reflected in the geopolitical landscape of Athens where the community provided the sanctuary in which the family placed its gifts (Linders 1972; Travlos 1971). The goddess had to be appeased and the ritual conducted appropriately; the consequences could be infertility, death, or infant mortality, and both household and community would fail.

The second stage of life-cycle rites sees the women move back into the house as the family withdraws from the social and religious life of the city. Yet neither the women nor the house becomes invisible. Instead, the home is marked in a manner that advertises the changes taking place within. At weddings, the house is decorated with ribbons and foliage (Llewellyn-Jones 2003: fig. 153). It stands out from the other houses in the city. At funerals, a pot of water is placed at the door (Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* 1032–3; Euripides, *Alcestis* 98–104; Menander, *Shield* 225–9). While it is possible that this is for visitors to wipe away pollution, it mirrors the placement of water vessels at the boundaries of sanctuaries and shrines. At births and deaths the

markings offer protection through the containment of pollution. These signs separate the household from others in the city. They are sufficiently clear that those who are afraid of ritual pollution can avoid the homes where birth or death is taking place (Theophrastus, *Characters* 16.9).

The family and its women withdraw into their separated and marked house. Attention now focuses on the individual in transition. The women wash and adorn the central body. The corpse is crowned and wrapped, the bride dressed, and the woman in labor protected with charms. This washing purifies the central individual. It offers them protection and separates them from the family around them in a visual and metaphysical sense: their purity contrasts with the family's pollution. The attendant women form a ritual circle around the individual in the same manner as a chorus (Lonsdale 1993:250). They chant and move in a ritual manner. The bride is surrounded by the *nympheutriai*, the girls whose company she leaves behind to become a wife (Llewellyn-Jones 2003:219; Oakley and Sinos 1993:16–21). The woman in labor is surrounded and helped by other mothers, who sing and chant to exhort the goddess to come. Their actions create a ritual space suitable for her arrival in the household, bringing the baby (Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* 507–9; Euripides, *Hippolytus* 166–8). Women of the family encircle the corpse and mourn (Boardman 1955). In each case, the movement of the women creates a ritual space, enclosing and protecting the vulnerable individual. Despite the fact that they are withdrawn from the community at this stage of the process and located within the house, the women continue to write the family changes into the social landscape of the community as the noise of lamenting and singing fills the streets.

Ritual pollution arises when persons or things are out of their proper context. The dead are out of place in a house with the living, the bride no longer belongs in her natal home, and the baby needs to be born. The next stage in the ritual process requires that the individual must be placed in their new context. This is a time of danger; the individual is separated and vulnerable. As the corpse begins its journey to the grave, the women of the family come out of the house, accompanying the procession and lamenting as the procession traverses the streets of the city. The bride travels from old home to new home, from hearth to hearth under the protection of torches and song. At birth, the movement comes from the birth goddess as she is called to the house, enters, and brings the baby. The participation and visibility of women at rites of transition is a feature of their unique ability to create ritual boundaries, separating individual from city and protecting both at a time of danger.

As the individual is rehoused, the ritual process reverses to restore the community and take into account the changes to the household (Goff 2004:27). The family returns to its house. There is a ritual feast which acknowledges the changes that have taken place in the family, and after a suitable period of time the family rejoins the city. The ritual process ends as it begins: gifts are left at public sanctuaries by or on behalf of bride and mother. Gifts are also taken to the corpse at the grave; images on white-figure *lēkythoi*, the flasks used to carry oil or perfume to the grave, show that women played an important part in placing these gifts (Shapiro 1991). As the symbol of house and family, women may become visible at the graves of deceased relatives.

The visibility of women at rites of transition reinforces their role as symbol of the household and their ability to change the meaning of space. They come out of

the household and into the community, bringing household interests to public attention (Goff 2004:27). Their movement reflects the mutual concern of house and family at birth, death, and marriage: the shared desire to ensure that the family endures and the need to maintain order.

Women and Boundaries

Women's ritual actions at birth, death, and marriage create and break down boundaries. As we have seen, they create separated spaces within the house by surrounding and enclosing the corpse, bride, and woman in labor. This allows the vulnerable individual to be placed apart in a protected ritual space. Women can also move through boundaries, to attend to those in a state of transition or to collapse the divisions between public and private, bringing household interests into the public sphere. Ritual space is created, defined, and dissolved by the bodies of the women. Women therefore become visible in our sources on occasions where ritual boundaries play an important role in religious behavior, whether in public or private contexts.

At the public festival of the Plynteria the women of the city come out of the house to participate in the preparations for the Panathenaea by disrobing and washing the statue of Athena (Burkert 1985:79). The women escort the statue of Athena to the sea for purification before returning it to her temple to await the presentation of the peplos at the Panathenaea. The women's actions here are not focused on breaking down social or ritual boundaries but on creating them. The belief that the gods themselves inhabited statues makes the washing of a statue a potentially dangerous act (Schnapp 1994). In surrounding the statue the women's bodies form a boundary that contains the danger. It also preserves the modesty of the disrobed virgin goddess. The presence and position of the women mirror their actions in surrounding bride, corpse, and woman in labor. They enclose and protect those within and without the circle. Women's participation here does not reflect a mixing of home and community but a separation of space: they create a ritual boundary to protect goddess and community.

Women also construct ritual boundaries in the domestic context. A passage from Menander's *Ghost* offers us interesting insights into how such boundaries are created and the actions of women in creating them. Here, the character Pheidias has fallen in love with what he believes to be a female apparition, seen at a household shrine. His servant Syros suggests somewhat sarcastically that the best way to rid Pheidias of his sickness is for him to undergo a purification:

> What do I advise? I say this. If this had been a real problem, Pheidias, you would have had to seek a real remedy for this. But yet you have not, so find a fake medicine for your fake illness and believe that it helps you. Let the women in a circle wipe all around you and burn incense around you. Sprinkle around water from three springs, throwing on salt, lentils . . . (Menander, *Ghost* 24–31)

The women place themselves around the body of Pheidias, just as a chorus circles the altar (Lonsdale 1993:120). They then mark the space around him with water. This has the effect of purifying both Pheidias and the area in which the ritual will take

place. The women also burn a scented substance; this serves two functions – it changes the atmosphere within the room and it also binds together those who are participating in the event. It marks them as a group set apart. The bodies and actions of the women map out an area within the room. They form a boundary that describes a temporary ritual space. Within this space Pheidias is isolated from the household and the ritual of purification can occur.

It is difficult to be certain from this passage exactly who the women are. The location of the ritual in the home may point to the involvement of the household ladies. In a second fragment of Menander, servant girls are used to circle an individual: "And we were burning incense five times a day, and seven serving girls were playing the cymbals in a circle whilst they cried the ritual chant" (Menander fr. 237 K-A). Here, again, the burning of a scented substance creates an atmosphere and, as in the first fragment, women mark the space. Again, they form a circle, defining and enclosing the sacred area and also, possibly, the location of the other participants. Women play an essential role in purification rites as they create temporary ritual space; they can then cross the ritual boundary to cleanse and heal. This explains why women become visible in descriptions of purification rites. The Superstitious Man calls out a priestess to purify him with squill and a puppy after seeing someone at the crossroads wreathed in garlic (Theophrastus, *Characters* 16.13). The mother of Aeschines is a priestess who purifies individuals before they join in the private ecstatic rites of her group (Demosthenes 18.258–61).

Conclusions

The position of citizen women in Athenian society is a paradox. Their reproductive capacity places them at the center of the polis and the center of the household: neither can survive without them. Yet they are also marginalized in a social and political sense: defined by their relationships with men, inferior in status to them, and, ideally, secluded within the house (Zeitlin 1982). The religious occasions where women appear most vividly in our sources are at rites of transition, all-female festivals, and in cults that required the creation or breaching of ritual, social, and communal boundaries. Female action and movement on these occasions shows that the home is a vital component in articulating the religious behavior of citizen women in Athens. In public contexts, at festivals and rites of transition, women's movement out of the house cuts across the traditional divisions between private and public, between house and city, and between men and women. Their actions allow the nature of these relationships to be examined and the boundaries to be constantly redefined. In the private sphere, while much of our evidence for private female practices is fragmentary, we can see that it shares a common theme in highlighting the importance of home and family in the life of a citizen wife. Menander's mother uses religion as a cover to meet her lost daughter (Menander, *Ghost* 49–56). Plato's women set up shrines and altars in response to bad dreams or evil portents; in doing so they act to protect themselves and their households (Plato, *Laws* 909e–910a). While texts may offer us incomplete views of private female behavior, the religious actions of citizen wives constantly reinforce and reflect their ideological role in Athenian society.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

There is no specific study of women's religious practices in the domestic context. For recent and comprehensive studies of women's ritual, see Dillon 2002 and Goff 2004, which focus on material from the public sphere yet also touch on evidence for women's ritual actions in the home. Cole 2004 looks at female religious behavior in house and city from a spatial perspective. For women, religion, and social status see Kron 1996. Most useful information comes in the form of articles or collections of articles. Winkler 1990b and Zeitlin 1982 consider the actions of women at festivals of Demeter, Adonis, and Dionysus. Blundell and Williamson 1998, Hawley and Levick 1995, and McAuslan and Walcot 1996 offer a range of articles considering different aspects of female religious behavior. The essays in Reeder-Williams 1995 offer perspectives from iconography. S. Lewis 2002 offers a refreshing and informative analysis of the problems of using images of women as a source. On women and death rites, see Shapiro 1991 and Stears 1998. For comprehensive studies of the textual and iconographic evidence for weddings, see Oakley and Sinos 1993 and Vérilhac and Vial 1998. Demand 1994 and Cole 1998 and 2004 offer the best studies of women and childbirth. For women and ritual movement see Delavaud-Roux 1994 and Lonsdale 1993. Information can also be gleaned from wider studies of religion or women. Burkert 1985 remains an invaluable resource, as does Parke's 1977 study of festivals and Simon's 1983 investigation of festivals from a more archaeological perspective. In the sphere of women's studies, Blundell 1995 offers a good overview of the lives of women up to the end of the classical period. Katz 1995 offers a particularly succinct analysis of the effect of ancient and modern ideologies on our ability to understand the lives of women in Athens.

CHAPTER TWENTY

"Something to do with Aphrodite": *Ta Aphrodisia* and the Sacred

Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge

The validity of some concepts and interpretative categories for the study of ancient societies, such as those of "myth," "rite," and "religion," has recently been called into question. "Sexuality," which is defined as the set practices and imagery associated with sex, belongs amongst such concepts. The term had no exact correlate in the vocabulary of the communities studied, and its application to them is accordingly anachronistic (Davidson 1998; Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990; Winkler 1990a). A good part of the discussion of such questions consists of echoes of and reactions, positive and negative, to Michel Foucault's three-volume *History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1976–84). Without entering into this particular debate, which remains outside our purview here, two remarks may serve to introduce this chapter.

First, one means of avoiding the danger of over-interpretation and anachronism is to privilege the semantic field of the Greek term *ta aphrodisia*. Secondly, this phrase, *ta aphrodisia*, in its very form evokes the figure of Aphrodite. The recognition of this in itself justifies us in investigating the relationship that obtained between sexuality and religious imagery in a Greek context. The goddess is the only one amongst the Olympians whose name generates the common noun that designates her sphere of intervention and prerogatives. The generation of polytheistic deities more naturally flows in the opposite direction, from the manifestation of a specific power to its divine personification (Rudhardt 1999; Stafford 2000). Eros is a very good example: experiencing the powerful effects of "love" and sex-drive, the Greeks deployed the word *erōs* to designate the divine power whose presence and action these feelings seemed to indicate. It is our typographical conventions that lead us to capitalize the name's initial letter. This chapter is therefore devoted to a review of the different facets of Aphrodite and Eros, and the different contexts in which their powers were manifested. Accordingly, it is not a question of investigating the sexual practices of the Greeks, but rather of exploring the religious imagery and practices to which the sphere of sexuality (*ta aphrodisia*) gave rise in their communities.

First of all, the language of myth will allow us to define some imagery in Greek thought about sexuality. Then, with a look at Aphrodite's cults, we will compare this imagery with ritual practice and with the expectations of her worshipers. At the same time this analysis will tackle the problem of a deity's mode of action and field of action in a polytheistic context (cf. Detienne 1997). Finally, we will pose the question as to whether "sacred prostitution" existed in Greece, and at the same time confront the supposedly "oriental" dimension of the figure of Aphrodite.

Eros and Aphrodite: Cosmic and Human Powers

Cosmogony and theogony: Hesiod

After the long preamble that enthrones Hesiod in his role as a poet inspired by the Muses, Hesiod's cosmogonical treatise witnesses the rise of Chaos, Gaia, and Eros (*Theogony* 115–20). The world is only just coming into existence, but Eros is already present with a divine status and a specific function: "the most beautiful of the immortal gods, Eros slackens the limbs and tames the mind and the wise counsel in the breasts of all gods and all men" (122–3). The power of Eros, his creative force, is accordingly required from the first to activate the birth of the first cosmic entities and to deploy their powers in turn. The entities that then arise are still intimately associated with the primordial physical universe: Earth, Sky, Sea, River/Ocean. But Uranus pushes back into Earth's womb the formidable children he has sired in coupling with her: the action of Eros closes down upon itself and the genealogical process comes to a halt. The solution to this cosmic problem is radical and bloody: Kronos castrates his father Uranus and throws his severed genitals into the salt sea (173–82). The act of castration separates the Sky and the Earth, whilst at the same time releasing the gods. This unblocking is accompanied by a redefinition of Eros' creative power. Thus a *kourē*, a "girl," is formed in the white foam produced by Uranus' genitals of as they fall into the sea. The verb *trephein* that is applied to this unusual generative process was to be used subsequently in the corpus of medical writing to denote the formation of the fetus within the womb (Demont 1978). This exceptional birth witnesses the appearance of the first anthromorphic female form in the cosmos. The birth of her "whom the gods and men call Aphrodite" (195–7) accordingly inaugurates a new mode of divine existence for the world: we have passed from cosmogony to theogony. Furthermore, from the beginnings of the world, cosmic Eros is fitted together with her (*omartein*) and forms her retinue, alongside Himeros, "Desire" (201). Henceforth he will be the powerful goddess' agent (Rudhardt 1986). Accordingly, Aphrodite is the first deity to be given a *timē*, a sphere of honor, and this is associated with the long account of her birth and the "portion she was allocated amongst humans and the immortal gods." The *moira* of the goddess is composed of virgins' whisperings, smiles, deceits (*exapatai*), pleasure (*terpsis*), and loving relationship (*philotēs*), terms which we must qualify with "sexual" (204–6; cf. Pironti 2005b, *contra* Calame 1996:55–8). The deep ambivalence of sexuality, expressed as "works of Aphrodite," is completely condensed in the description of her sudden epiphany, a subtle mixture of desire and violence, tension and appeasement (Pirenne-Delforge 2001b; Pironti 2005a, 2005b).

The first mentions of humans in the work are associated with cosmic Eros and Aphrodite: they share with the gods a common capacity to unite themselves (122, 204). However, the *Theogony* does not offer an anthropogony in the strict sense. The poet proceeds to the progressive definition of the human condition, the crisis of which is constituted by the episode of the Promethean crisis (Leclerc 1993:157). The final point of this crisis between gods and men, represented by Prometheus, is the creation of the first woman. Now, the narrative of the manufacturing of the woman (anonymous here, but named Pandora in the *Works and Days*) converges at numerous points with that of the formation of Aphrodite (Pirenne-Delforge 2001a): the goddess is the fruit of the vengeance of Kronos, armed by Gaia, while Pandora is the product of the vengeance of Zeus; they are both abnormal products, emanating from male origins (heavenly "foam" and sea; clay modeled by Hephaestus at Zeus' behest); Aphrodite is the first female divine form, while Pandora is the first female human form (590: "the race of female women" originates from her); they are both "beautiful," with that irresistible beauty conferred by *charis*; Aphrodite presides over the union between sexually differentiated beings, whereas Pandora, the nubile *parthenos*, makes a male out of the man whose partner she becomes (Vernant 1996). Furthermore, the episode of Pandora's creation crystallizes the *timē* of Aphrodite in the human sphere: human life will be an inextricable mixture of goods and ills, mirroring the ambivalence of the goddess' powers. Sexuality is just one aspect of this human condition, which also includes the requirements to work to live and to honor the gods, but it constitutes one of the privileged places of this alternation between goods and ills designed by Zeus himself.

Power, victory, or love? Choosing Aphrodite and Helen

Like Pandora, the beautiful evil (*kalon kakon*), the beautiful Helen is a great bane for humans (*mega pēma*), and she is intimately associated with Aphrodite and her works. The judgment of Paris is the *locus classicus* for a specific schematic division of roles between the goddesses: Paris does not seem to have hesitated long between Hera with power, Athene with victory, and Aphrodite with the love of Helen. But the choice of Helen's love was a choice subsidiary to that of war, and epic made great play with the two images (Rousseau 1998). The evils that erotic desire inflicts upon the life of an individual man, for Hesiod as he tussles with first woman, in epic become the massacre of thousands.

Furthermore, the impulse to war is also a form of *erōs*: sex-drive and war-frenzy share that blinding of the senses that induces the human being to lose control (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1264; cf. Pironti 2005b). When poetry and drunkenness cross paths with Aphrodite, it is notably in the form of the desire that they both arouse in those they possess. This is why melic poetry makes Eros the agent of the powerful Aphrodite when it takes up the theme of his destructive power (Calame 1996:23–52).

Tragic love

The typical theme of the tragic stage is the excess that drives the community to ask searching questions of itself. Here the power of Eros and Aphrodite is no longer

deployed in the genealogical fashion of the *Theogony*, but more along the lines of the Fates in epic. Several choral prayers assert the power of these deities who drive humans to lose control if they do not submit themselves to love at the appropriate point of their development (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 443–50, 1268–81; Sophocles fr. 941 *TrGF* and *Antigone* 781–800).

The profile of the young Hippolytus is particularly significant. He is wholly devoted to the joys of the life of Artemis, and he despises Aphrodite and the female sex: his obsession with purity gives a clear signal of his rejection of sexuality. In so refusing to submit himself to the universal law sponsored by the goddess, he fails to respect her divine *timē* and brings a deadly vengeance down upon himself (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1–22). The instrument of this vengeance is Phaedra, upon whom an irrepressible, violent, and grievous desire descends which can only be appeased by death. Hippolytus thus willfully holds himself back from the social status that his physical maturity imposes on him: a young man of marriageable age, he turns away from marriage by keeping himself in some sort of indeterminate virginal state sponsored by Artemis. The opening remarks of Aphrodite explain that one must respect the delicate balances between the Greek gods: the problem is not Hippolytus' preference for Artemis, but rather his scorn for Aphrodite herself (20–2). For refusing to be "tamed" by the marriage yoke and submit himself to sexual union, he will be subjugated by his team of horses, maddened by Poseidon.

Other figures from tragedy, the Danaids, illustrate the same point on the female side. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants* we encounter these girls fleeing from marriage with their cousins, the Aegyptiads. The lost parts of the trilogy brought this refusal to a fantastical climax with the murder of the young men immediately upon their marriage (Des Bouvrie 1990). As in the case of Hippolytus, the central problem of the plot is the refusal of the girls, now they have reached sexual maturity, to come to terms with their status and become wives and mothers. The conception of marriage in the classical period indissolubly embraced sexual union and reproduction. A famous Aeschylean fragment connected with the Danaid trilogy puts praise of her own power into Aphrodite's mouth, and this attests the strength of the bond between sexuality and fertility (fr. 44 *TrGF*; cf. Euripides fr. 898 *TrGF*): "The sacred Sky feels a desire to penetrate the Earth, and the Earth is possessed by the desire to enjoy marriage. A shower comes to fertilize the Earth falling from her husband Sky. And this is how she brings forth for mortals the pasture of flocks, the living [*bios*] of Demeter and the mature fruit [*opōra*] of the trees. All that exists is created from moist marriage. And it is I that am the cause of all that." Herodotus attributes the foundation of the Thesmophoria to the Danaids after their arrival from Egypt (2.171). This tradition intersects the theme of submission to sexuality with that of the production of children to assure the survival of the community.

Platonic variations

The imagery that tragedy manipulates is so pregnant that it is found, in another context, in Plato's remarks on the different varieties of madness. Erotic *mania*, the madness of love, enables one far more than poetic or Dionysiac *mania* to recall the appearance of true beauty through sight of beauty in this world. Hence, in the *Symposium*, Socrates, speaking through the priestess Diotima, defines the purpose of

erōs as "giving birth in beauty, whether in the form of a body or a soul" (206b). The figure of Eros is accordingly conceived of as a generative force, like the cosmogonic god of Hesiod. The Hesiodic god is "the most beautiful" (*kallistos*) and Plato explains the companionship of Eros and Aphrodite from the facts that Eros naturally loves the beautiful, and the goddess is beautiful (203c). And so the direct link that the philosopher establishes between generation – albeit completely spiritual generation – and immortality harmonizes with the vision of a form of immortality that humans achieve by means of their children (Halperin in Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990:257–308).

Cults in the Poleis: Who, When, and Why?

This brief survey of classical and archaic texts is more than a mere excursion into literature. The imagery found there gives access to a religious thinking which is found at work in the religious lives of Greek communities. Without making any claim to producing an exhaustive overview of the cults offered to Aphrodite and Eros here (Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 1998), it will be our task to trace out the lines of force that display the echoes between "myth" and "cult" in relation to *aphrodisia* (cf. Pironti 2005a).

The common thread that runs through the worship accorded to Aphrodite in the Greek cities is her patronage of the sphere of sexuality, in all the complexity that Hesiod already identified for it. At any rate, the relationships of the worshipers who turn towards her are modulated by their age-group and social status. Thus the matrimonial prerogatives staged in tragedies, mentioned above, are well attested at the level of cult. For example, the epithet Nymphia that the goddess takes on at Troezen makes her the protectress of the *nymphē*, which denotes both the young woman of marriageable age and the young wife prior to the birth of her first child (it is significant that the term also denotes "clitoris"; cf. Winkler 1990a). At Hermione, every woman on the point of making a union with a man, whatever her age, had to offer a sacrifice to the goddess. At Naupactus, in a cave outside the city, the widows prayed to the goddess that they might contract a new marriage (Pausanias 2.32.7, 2.37.2, 10.38.12). At Athens Aphrodite Urania was honored in a similar context. The local etiology told that King Aegeus had founded her sanctuary in the Agora. This is how he had won the goddess' support for his desire for a child, and how he had attempted to appease the divine anger directed against his sisters Procne and Philomela (Pausanias 1.14.7). The central values of marriage are perverted in the horrible story of these two women: the rape of Philomela by her brother-in-law Tereus induced the sisters to put the couple's legitimate child to death and to offer him to his father as a meal. This catalog of horrors rendered the marriage of Procne and Tereus a "union without *charis*" (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.428–32). The mythical context of the sanctuary's foundation allows us to specify Aphrodite Urania's sphere of intervention, and this has been confirmed by a striking piece of evidence. A *thēsauros* from the beginning of the fourth century BC bears an inscription which associates it with the offering of a drachma for the goddess for "the commencement of marriage" (*SEG* 41.182). This object was located not in the Agora, but in the little sanctuary that Aphrodite "of the Gardens" shared with Eros on the north slope of

the Acropolis. The inscription confirms that the goddess bore the epithet Urania there too. The reference of this epithet to the primordial figure of Uranus is obvious. Now, Proclus refers to the obligation at Athens to honor the primordial couple Uranus–Gaia at the beginning of a marriage (Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 40): the monolog that Aeschylus (fr. 44 *TrGF*, quoted above) puts into Aphrodite's mouth is accordingly rooted both in Hesiod's cosmic vision and at the same time in local cult practice (Pirenne-Delforge 2006).

But Aphrodite does not wait for marriage to assert her power. From the moment that the beauty of a young person becomes a *charis*, an active grace, Aphrodite is present (by contrast, a boy or girl who is too young is *acharis*: Sappho fr. 49 Voigt). The girls' choruses, the integrative function of which has been demonstrated by Claude Calame (1977), are one of the places in which Aphrodite and Eros appear, weaving the distinctly homoerotic first threads between young people en route to social integration. Two Athenian traditions suggest that the cults of Aphrodite equally welcomed young men as they emerged from childhood. Thus, the sanctuary of Aphrodite Pandemos ("of all the people") had been founded by Solon with the money accumulated from brothel-keepers. The tradition may have been simply comic (or polemical: Petre 1992–4) and may just have made the obvious connection between Aphrodite and prostitution. However, the fragment that preserves it specifies that Solon had set up female slaves in the brothels "because of the vigor of the young men" (Nicander *FGrH* 271 frr. 9–10). It is therefore the sexuality, vigorous and still uncontrolled, of young men as much as it is the activity of female prostitutes that is connected with Aphrodite in this etiology. Along similar lines, Plutarch (*Theseus* 18) tells how Apollo advised Theseus to make Aphrodite his guide for his expedition to Crete: as he offered her a nanny-goat on the shore, the young man saw it transformed into a billy-goat, a vision that prefigured his own sexual maturation under Aphrodite's auspices. The Aphrodite concerned here bore the epithet Epitragia, according to Plutarch. Her cult is very well attested in the imperial period (*IG* ii^2 5115, 5148) and the account in the *Theseus* invites us to locate it in the old port of Phalerum. The sanctuary of Pandemos stood on the southwest slope of the Acropolis: according to Pausanias (1.22.3; cf. *IG* ii^2 659 = *LSCG* 39), the goddess was worshiped there alongside Peitho, and the cult had been founded by Theseus. Plutarch (*Theseus* 24.2, 25.1) specifies that he had brought together "all the people" (*pandēmos*) by virtue of his "persuasion" (*peithō*). Even if the image of the money from the brothels is probably derived from a comedy (Philemon fr. 3 K-A), the etiology recorded by Plutarch attests that the vigorous desire of adolescent males fell within the goddess' sphere of influence. The fact of Pandemos' worship as a guarantor of the unity of "all the people" does not detract from her core concern with sexuality: it is precisely because she is the deity of *mixis*, of the "mixing" between creatures, that she is called upon to intervene in the cohesion of the "body" politic.

An interesting parallel comes from the island of Kos. Two sequential inscriptions, from the beginning and the end of the second century BC, stipulate the rights and obligations of a priesthood of Aphrodite in the context of its sale (Parker and Obbink 2000; Segre 1993: ED 178). This unique priesthood presides over two cults: Aphrodite Pandemos and Aphrodite Euploia, worshiped, in all probability, on the sea shore, in a unique enclosure that included two twin temples (Parker 2002:144–5).

Pandemos seems to have been worshiped by all the demes of Kos on the same day in the month of Panamos (Segre 1993:178.26–31; *LS* 169A.12–13, 172.1–4), perhaps in connection with the synoecism that had taken place on the island in 366/5 BC. Furthermore, all the women of the island, whatever their social status, had to offer a sacrifice to the goddess in the year following their marriage (Segre 1993: ED 178.15–20; cf. Dillon 1999). Finally, the sailors who served on warships sacrificed to Aphrodite Pontia at the end of their expedition (Parker and Obbink 2000:5–9). This is a striking illustration of the complexity of divine figures in a polytheistic context. No simple, mechanical explanation can really account for it. However, we may note that Pandemos seems to incorporate at once a "political" dimension (synoecism, as at Athens) and a matrimonial one. The two fields to which the goddess' powers are applied are not in conflict. The explanation is to be found in a mode of intervention unique to the goddess: her powerful ability to rouse up the vital impulse, to unite beings and to mingle their bodies. The example of Naucratis, where Aphrodite Pandemos is attested from the end of the archaic period, shows that the integrative significance of the epithet has a validity that goes beyond a strictly civil context: it is hardly appropriate in the case of an *emporion* (Scholtz 2003).

The sexual reference of the *mixis* can accordingly be connected with the imagery of social cohesion: the danger of *stasis* can similarly be associated with the grievous and passionate excesses the goddess inspires. Thus, an Aphrodite "Guide of the Demos," associated with the Graces on an Athenian altar dating from the turn of the third and second centuries BC (*IG* ii^2 2798), probably evokes the harmony between the citizens after the recovery of independence in 229 BC. Such a context would equally explain the honor the presiding magistrates give to Aphrodite, sometimes accompanied by Peitho (Pirenne-Delforge 1994:446–50). One example from among many: in the second century BC five Megarian *damiourgoi* made a dedication to the goddess (*IG* vii 41). Now, according to the evidence of Pausanias, there were at least two sanctuaries of Aphrodite at Megara. One, on the Karia, one of the city's two acropoleis, housed the cult of the goddess Epistrophia, beside the temple of Dionysus Nyktelios and an oracular sanctuary of Night (Pausanias 1.40.6). The other, in the agora near the sanctuary of Dionysus Dasyllios and Patrōos, housed an ancient ivory statue of Aphrodite Praxis. In the fourth century this ancestral object was joined by statues of Peitho, "Persuasion," and Paregoros, "Consolation," by Praxiteles, and the very coherent group of Eros, Himeros, "Desire," and Pothos, "Yearning," by Scopas (Pausanias 1.43.6). Pausanias does not comment on either of the epithets and leaves the reader to make his own interpretation. The goddess of the acropolis is "she who impels," and the environment in which she is accommodated, with a nocturnal Dionysus and deified Night, leaves us in little doubt about the sexual connotations of this "impulsion." The epithet of Praxis in the agora conveys the action in its actual accomplishment. The goddess thus described sponsors all speech and all action that ensues. The figures that make up her retinue orient her field of action in the erotic sphere, but the dedication by magistrates allows this field to be enlarged to embrace a public office in which persuasion is required. The proximity of a Dionysus "of the ancestors" thus suggests an inversion of the cultic configuration on the Karia.

The notion of *praxis* suggests a more precise interpretation of the term *aphrodisia*, which most commonly refers to a male symposium at the conclusion of an enterprise, whether maritime, martial, or civic (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4.4–7; Plutarch, *Moralia*

301f, 785e, 1097e). The name of the celebration pays homage to Aphrodite, albeit in the privacy of particular houses: the culmination of the enterprise and the releasing of the tension entailed could explain her role here, before the return to normality (Graf 1995).

On Kos, as we have seen, the marine dimension of Aphrodite's prerogatives is conveyed by the epithet Pontia. She is also Euploia or Limenia in other contexts. Prominent on sea fronts, she responds alongside other gods, such as Poseidon or the Dioscuri, to the anxiety of sailors to reach a good port. This dimension is already present in the Hesiodic account of her birth which makes her a daughter of the foam (*aphros*) of the castrated sky and of the sea. Furthermore, in crossing from Cythera to Cyprus, Aphrodite immediately embarks upon a Mediterranean voyage. If one accepts, with G. Pironti (2005b), that it is the narrative as a whole that establishes the *timē* of the goddess, then these images offer an actual explanation of the powers of the goddess over the waves. It is by virtue of the fact that she is daughter of the sky and the sea that Aphrodite is worshiped by humans as overseeing their maritime enterprises. But the myth also speaks of sexual union: according to Dumézilian principle, the goddess' mode of action should remain the stable element within her interventions, whatever the context in which they take place. So, assuming that the polytheist system is coherent, we may conjecture that the image of the calmness of the sky and the sea derives from the same representational complex that constructs from sex a metaphor for the harmony of the body politic (Pirenne-Delforge 1994:433–7, queried by Parker 2002).

The inscription from Kos specifies that it is the crews of warships who worship Aphrodite Pontia at the conclusion of their expeditions. The marine dimension is accordingly coupled with a martial dimension which constitutes one of the prerogatives of a goddess *a priori* with little concern for such matters. Now the field of battle is not unfamiliar with the power of Aphrodite, and her relationship with Ares is well attested in myth and cult alike. As in the case of maritime enterprises, marital enterprises pose the problem of the coherence of the figure of the deity engaged in improbable spheres of intervention, if one cleaves to the soothing image of the goddess of beauty and love. On the other hand, the scheme retains a certain coherence from the fact that one exploits martial imagery to describe the sexual union itself, and the tremendous impulse that it brings about in the human being. The complementarity of opposites (*oikos*/war, female/male, *erōs*/death) is insufficient to account for the relationship between Aphrodite and Ares (for which see Pirenne-Delforge 1994:450–4): the associations between Aphrodite and the world of the warrior lie at the heart of her own prerogatives and they are not hers merely by the virtue of her union with Ares (Pironti 2005a): this is particularly clear in the case of the cults that she received at Sparta (Pausanias 3.15.10–11, 3.17.5).

Finally, the goddess whom the poets describe as "golden" is also "black" in some of her cults (Pausanias 2.2.4, 8.6.5, 9.27.5). The vague concept of the "fertility goddess" presiding over "black earth" does not do justice to the complexity of the data bearing upon this Aphrodite, any more than the concepts of a "marine goddess" or a "warrior goddess" are useful in describing Aphrodite's place in the Greek pantheon. Thus, when Pausanias tries to explain the epithet, he associates it with the nocturnal nature of sexual relations (8.6.5). Even if the explanation may seem a little superficial to us, we must note that a Greek was instinctively looking for the sexual dimension of the goddess' prerogatives in her various cults. Such a concern on

the part of an "insider" must form part of our own "external" investigation. Once again, the web of mythical imagery comes to support and enhance our investigation: fertilizing moisture, conceived on the model of the sexual union between the sky and the earth, may come distinctively under the competence of Aphrodite (cf. Aeschylus, above). The image of her nimble feet which cause the first plants of the world to shoot up (Hesiod, *Theogony* 194–5) is not merely poetic: it is truly "theogonic." The birth of the goddess gives rise to a paradigmatic vital impulse that brings with it the fecundity of creatures and the fertility of the earth. Epic plays with the same theme in associating the sexual union between Zeus and Hera on Ida with the growth of vegetation (*Iliad* 14.346–51; Calame 1996:173–85; Motte 1973).

Therefore, even without sufficient evidence to reconstruct actual cult practice in connection with "black" Aphrodite, the mythical background allows us to assert the importance of her patronage of vital humors in this particular context.

The desiring impulse is the very image of life and of its drive, creative and potentially destructive. This impulse and its fulfillment in sexual union constitute the frame on which images and actions are woven, the imagery of the cults concerned with *aphrodisia* (on the various cults of Eros, cf. Pirenne-Delforge 1998).

Sacred Prostitution and Oriental Influence: Some Historiographical Myths

Aphrodite presides over all forms of sexual union, matrimonial and extra-marital, heterosexual and homosexual, with concubines, courtesans, or prostitutes. The respective statuses of courtesans and prostitutes, male and female, were subject to a wide range of variation, from the free and educated courtesan to the slave whose room for maneuver was non-existent. Dedications by courtesans and prostitutes to Aphrodite are well attested, particularly in the *Palatine Anthology*: there is no doubt that the goddess was the official patron of this professional guild!

Sacred prostitution?

On the subject of sex for sale, no study of *aphrodisia* and the sacred in Greece can avoid mentioning the "sacred prostitution" associated with the city of Corinth (MacLachlan 1992). I embarked upon the study of this a decade ago, building on the work of C. Calame (1989) and H.D. Saffrey (1985), and arrived at negative conclusions (Pirenne-Delforge 1994:100–26). Since this question continues to hinder contemporary analyses of "the religion of women" (Dillon 2002:199–202), even though the argument against sacred prostitution is never confronted, I shall allow myself to present the basics of this case afresh.

The data bearing upon this question falls into three groups, to which one must add the argument for oriental influence upon the cult, which we will tackle in conclusion:

1 Three texts mentioning the supplication that Corinthian women, married women, and prostitutes addressed to Aphrodite of the Acrocorinth on the eve of the battle of Salamis in 480 BC and that Simonides immortalized in an epigram (Plutarch, *Moralia* 871a; Athenaeus 13.573c–d; scholiast Pindar, *Olympians* 13.32b).

2 A fragment of Pindar (fr. 122 Snell–Maehler) – cited by Athenaeus following his mention of the 480 BC supplication – concerning the vow that Xenophon of Corinth made to the Aphrodite of his city, to bring her a hundred girls if he won the victory at Olympia.
3 The famous passage of Strabo (C378–9) on the thousand sacred slave women controlled by the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Corinth, who helped to ruin the shipowners.

The 480 supplication

On the eve of the battle of Salamis the Greeks were in a desperate situation. In the hour of danger, the women of Corinth naturally fled for refuge to the sanctuary of Aphrodite on the Acrocorinth. Plutarch simply mentions the women (*gunaikes*) praying to the goddess to inspire their husbands with the desire (*erōs*) for combat. Athenaeus includes the supplication in a wider study of the ancient Corinthian custom (*nomimon archaion*) of appealing to as great a number of *hetairai* as possible to supplicate Aphrodite when the city was in danger: he accordingly mentions their intervention in 480 BC without breathing a word about *gunaikes*, and he cites the treatise *On Pindar* by Chameleon of Heraclea. However, the scholiast to Pindar speaks only of *gunaikes*, in terms close to those used by Plutarch, whilst deriving his information from Theopompus. All three texts cite the epigram composed on this occasion, but only the scholiast attributes it to Simonides, specifying that "the elegiac lines can still be seen today inscribed on the left-hand side as one enters the temple." Plutarch and the scholiast construct a tight parallel between the warriors and their wives, whilst passing over the courtesans in silence. Athenaeus makes no mention of the Corinthian wives because the parallel he constructs is of another sort: the 480 supplication constitutes the counterpart at public level to the vow made by Xenophon of Corinth at private level, to which we will come. A fragment of Alexis, also preserved by Athenaeus (fr. 255 K-A = Athenaeus 13.574b–c) stipulates that the free women and the courtesans each celebrated their own *aphrodisia*. One may, accordingly, suppose that the 480 supplication was undertaken by two groups of worshipers. Whatever the case, at no point is there mention of "sacred" prostitutes or courtesans.

The "fillies" of Xenophon of Corinth

In Athenaeus the narrative of the 480 supplication constitutes the first panel of a diptych, the second part of which is devoted to the private equivalent of this sort of ritual. Thus Xenophon of Corinth, before competing at Olympia, made the vow "to bring *hetairai* to the goddess should he be victorious." The *skolion* that Pindar composed to celebrate the victor was sung at the time of the symposium in the company of *hetairai*. The song is addressed first to the goddess to whom "Xenophon led a herd of hundred fillies, for joy in having seen the realization of his prayers." Then the poet addresses the young women: "Girls of numerous guests, servants of Peitho in wealthy Corinth, you who burn the golden-yellow drops of pale incense and whose thoughts often fly towards Aphrodite, the heavenly mother of Loves, it is to you in your blamelessness that she grants the right, my children, to garner the fruit of sweet youth on pleasant couches. . . ." Athenaeus then cites another extract in which

Pindar asks himself about the masters of the Isthmus' possible disapproval of his "familiarity with common women." These words, like the 480 supplication, are frequently held to demonstrate the existence of a ritual prostitution in honor of Aphrodite (with the notable exception of Saffrey 1985 and Calame 1989). Xenophon had "consecrated" the young girls to the goddess after buying them at market. Now the text talks at no point of a "consecration" or a "dedication," but of an act of thanks that takes the form of a sacrifice. The *skolion* was sung at the subsequent feast. Xenophon's vow concerned both a sacrifice in thanks and an aristocratic feast under the aegis of Aphrodite, perhaps in a room in the sanctuary devoted to this function (cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 146d; on the *hetaira* at the citizen feast, cf. Calame 1989).

Strabo's hierodouloi

The geographer looks over the history of Corinth and the conditions that led to its prosperity. He proceeds:

> The sanctuary of Aphrodite was so rich that it possessed more than a thousand sacred slaves [*hierodouloi*] in the form of courtesans that men and women alike had dedicated [*anatithēmi*] to the goddess. It was accordingly by virtue of these that the city became crowded and rich; indeed, it was easy for shipowners to ruin themselves there and this is the reason for the proverb that states "It is not given to every man to cross to Corinth."

Only the proverb cited is in the present tense: the remainder of the text is in the aorist, referring to an indeterminate time in the past. Passing on to the description of the sanctuary, Strabo refers simply to the *naïdion* of Aphrodite, which cuts a sorry figure by contrast with its former glory. Neither he nor Pausanias two centuries later (2.5.1) affirm the practice of sacred prostitution. But Strabo returns to the subject when, in book 12 (3.36 = C559), he describes Comana in Pontus and the local veneration for the goddess Ma:

> Many women prostitute their bodies, the majority of whom are consecrated to the goddess. In some respects, in fact, this city is a mini-Corinth, since the large number of courtesans at Corinth, consecrated to Aphrodite, produced a considerable increase in the population and gave rise to multiple festivals.

By way of conclusion he cites afresh the same proverb on crossing to Corinth. In contrast to the two other texts in this group, Strabo speaks explicitly of *hierai*, "sacred," courtesans. However, his remarks on Corinth are on each occasion confined to the past, whilst the circumstances in Comana in Pontus – Strabo's home territory – belong to the present. Hence, in the face of this second-hand testimony which otherwise goes unsupported, we may consider that Strabo has projected an institutional reality that he knew well – the dedication of slaves to the service of the great sanctuaries of Asia Minor – onto the ancient custom of involving courtesans in public supplications or in private vows addressed to Corinthian Aphrodite. Pindar's *skolion* leaves few doubts about the significance of this custom: to secure massive honor from a privileged category of worshipers with, perhaps, a financial advantage for the sanctuary thrown in – but no information is available on this. Corinth certainly had a reputation for beauty and for the luxurious life of its courtesans, and

there is an indication too of brothels (Hesychius s.v. *katakleistoi*). A port on each side of the Isthmus would in itself be sufficient to account for the colorful image of Corinthian prostitution. This practice becomes "sacred" when it is organically attached to a sanctuary and its deity: the fact that Xenophon must "bring" the young women into the sanctuary is sufficient to show that their participation in the sacrifice is associated with the imperatives of the victor's ceremonial act of thanks, and not with the sacred nature of their office. Strabo's evidence therefore looks like a distortion of local facts – the prostitution of a two-port city and the exceptional protective status of Aphrodite of the Acrocorinth, which privileges the devotion of courtesans – reinterpreted in the light of "exotic" traditions.

Arguments from silence must be handled with care. Nonetheless, Herodotus' silence may be added to the dossier: although discussing occasional sacred prostitution in Babylon on the one hand (1.199) and the Corinthian dynasties on the other (5.92), he breathes no word about any such practice at Corinth. He had no reason to speak of it, because it never consisted of anything other than the showy but genuinely Greek devotion of the goddess' privileged worshipers. Similarly, in discussing the case of Aphrodisias in Caria, where a decree protected doves, Louis Robert (1971) emphatically asserted that the city did not have some doves that were sacred and others that were not. All doves were held to belong to the goddess. So it was at Corinth: there were no prostitutes more sacred than others. They were all protected by the goddess, who delighted in the massive honors they paid her in exceptional circumstances. But sexual relations were no more permitted in Aphrodite's Corinthian sanctuary than they were in Greece's other sacred places: *aphrodisia* belonged amongst those conditions of the human body that required precautions and purifications before approaching the sphere of the divine and the sacred (Parker 1983:74–103).

Sacred prostitution in Greece is a historiographical myth. The other case generally invoked to support this thesis is that of Tralles in Asia Minor. But Stephanie Budin has recently (2003b) demonstrated that the inscriptions mentioning *pallakes* in this city had nothing to do with any such practice. Beyond Greece the evidence for, for example, Gravisca (Torelli 1977) and likewise Eryx, for which Strabo is once again our sole source (6.2.6 = C272) ought to be re-evaluated with greater prudence.

A certain image of the Orient

An argument that was long advanced to explain the supposedly attested existence of sacred prostitution was that of the oriental influence, and more specifically Phoenician, influence to which Corinth had been subject. Even when Corinth was recognized as "completely Greek," sacred prostitution was the sole element conceded to this oriental impact (Dunbabin 1957:51–2): a good example of a viciously circular argument.

The question cannot be dissociated from the nagging question of the goddess' origins. The Greeks themselves derived Aphrodite Urania from the Near East via Cyprus, with the Phoenicians as intermediaries (Herodotus 1.105; Pausanias 1.14.7). The functional profile of oriental goddesses such as Innana, Ishtar, or Astarte has induced many moderns to fall in behind the ancient notion: these various "sky queens" (= Urania!), connected with sexuality, birds, and war, offered so many plausible models for the Greeks' Aphrodite. Indeed, Aphrodite did not appear in the

Linear B documents and, from Homer, she was *Kupris*, "the Cyprian": it was at Paphos that the most important of her sanctuaries was to be found, the origin of which went back to the twelfth century BC. Despite recent attempts to determine the career of a "proto"-Aphrodite (Budin 2003b), it is difficult to get beyond vague notions such as "borrowing," "assimilation," or "syncretism," since the problem of the genesis of gods is a complex one, and probably insoluble when posed in these terms.

A compromise method with which to address the question as to how a divine figure whose functions were oriented towards sexuality came to be formed in Greece at the dawn of the first millennium is to analyze the impact of the iconography of the "nude goddess" (Böhm 1990; Bonnet and Pirenne-Delforge forthcoming). These images are well attested in the sanctuaries on the Aegean coasts in the geometric and archaic periods, i.e. at a time when the Greek local pantheons were being developed. Images of a nude woman in frontal position, inherited directly from oriental models, must have answered the particular needs of the communities that adopted them. That these needs were connected with sexuality is hardly to be doubted. However, it is not a matter of making these figurines into so many Aphrodites; it is rather a matter of thinking about the context of the construction of types in this period and the religious imagination to which they bear witness. After flourishing for some two centuries, this iconography disappeared: women and goddesses recovered their clothes as the city formalized to an ever greater extent the respective roles of man and woman, especially that of the legitimate wife. We have to wait until the Aphrodite of Praxiteles to see the resurgence of the theme in a divine context (Stewart 1997). In the fourth century, in a pantheon that was now well structured, fashioned at panhellenic level by the secular recitation of Homeric epic, such a direct evocation of female seductiveness and sexuality in all its maturity could only induce Praxiteles to christen his statue with a single divine name: the Aphrodite of *aphrodisia*.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For modern discussions of "sexuality" in an ancient context, amongst many other references, see Davidson 1998, Foucault 1976–84, Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990, and Winkler 1990a. See also, for an iconographical and archaeological point of view, Koloski-Ostrow and Lyons 1997 and Stewart 1997. For the cults of Aphrodite and Eros in the Greek world, see Calame 1996, Graf 1995, Pirenne-Delforge 1994 and 1998, and Rosenzweig 2004. For a literary study of these gods, see Bittrich 2005 (with previous bibliography). For cosmogonic Eros, see Rudhardt 1986 and Pirenne 2001. For Aphrodite's associations with Ares, see Pironti 2005a and 2005b. For sacred prostitution in Corinth see Calame 1989, MacLachlan 1992, Pirenne-Delforge 1994:100–26, and Saffrey 1985. The problem of the "origin" of Aphrodite is a vexing one, probably insoluble: see, nevertheless, the attempts of Budin 2003a and Friedrich 1978. Another way to consider this problem is presented in Pirenne-Delforge 2001b.

PART VII

Mysteries and Magic

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Finding Dionysus

Susan Guettel Cole

Paradoxes

By the classical period Dionysus was to be found everywhere in the Greek world, but when we look for tangible traces of his presence or activity, he is hard to pin down. He had many small sanctuaries, but rarely a substantial temple. Greek theaters were called *tou Dionusou*, "[the place] of Dionysus," and every Greek theater was built in his honor. Nevertheless, a famous Greek proverb could claim that Greek drama had, "nothing to do with Dionysus" (Pickard-Cambridge 1962:124–6). Bulls were slaughtered in sacrifice to the god at his major city festival in Athens, the Dionysia, but the goat, the more common sacrificial victim mandated for him in local regulations for sacrifice elsewhere, was not even allowed on the Athenian acropolis (Burkert 1985:229).

Dionysus had a fluid identity. Although ranked as a god, he had a mortal mother. He was born twice, once from his dead mother and a second time from his father's "male womb" (Euripides, *Bacchae* 95). He was recognized as divine and therefore immortal, but his tomb was shown to visitors in the temple of Apollo at Delphi (*FGrH* 328 fr. 7; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 365a; Piérart 1996). In the archaic period he is depicted as a mature adult, bearded and composed. However, he is also represented as a youth with hair to the shoulders (Euripides, *Bacchae* 150, 235, 455) and described as "shaped like a girl" (*thēlomorphos*: *Bacchae* 353) or as looking "like an unmarried girl" (Antoninus Liberalis 10.1). Dionysus did not belong to the original group of twelve gods on Olympus, but he is included in the group of twelve as depicted on archaic Attic pottery (Long 1987:4–5). The branch he carries (*bakkhos*) is a sign of his identity. Called *Bakkhos*, *Bakkhios*, or *Bakkheus* himself, he shares his title with his mortal worshipers, *Bakkhoi* (masculine) or *Bakkhai* (feminine). As a god he should have fed on nectar and ambrosia and never felt a twinge of indigestion, but Aristophanes could put him on the stage suffering from a bout of diarrhea (*Frogs* 479–88). Finally, although he himself is not shown in sexual arousal (Jameson

1993:47–50), Dionysus is called *enorkhēs* (with testicles intact), on Lesbos and Samos; naked satyrs in his entourage are highly sexed and often depicted with erections (Lissarague 1990b), and erect *phalloi* were a ritual item in his dramatic festivals.

Dionysus freely crosses gender boundaries, and often appears on vases in the same garments as his female worshipers. In one of his first appearances in Greek tragedy his dress is so much like a woman's clothing that Lykourgos calls him "girlie-boy" (*gunnis*; Aeschylus, *Edonians* fr. 61 *TrGF*). Dionysus regularly wears a *krokōtos*, "party dress," and *mitra*, "headband," clothing normally worn by females (Bremmer 1999:187; Loraux 1990:37–8). On Delos he even inherits a hand-me-down garment from Artemis. When the Chorus of Sophocles' *Oedipus* sings about Dionysus' wardrobe, it chants:

> I call on the one who wears the golden *mitra* on his head, the god who gave his name to this land, Bakkhos, with his ruddy face, to whom they cry "Euoi," the one who wears the same outfit as the maenads ... (*Oedipus Tyrannus* 209–12)

Finally, in a society where most rituals were divided by gender and female attendants rarely served male gods, Dionysus is often tended by an official priestess of the city. When his rites are restricted to women, his attendants are usually female, but when associated with the theater, Dionysus is always served by male priests.

Early History

The name of Dionysus is inscribed on two Mycenaean Linear B tablets found at Pylos and on one from Khania, on Crete (Hallager, Vlasakis, and Hallager 1992), but we have no idea what this god meant to the Mycenaean communities who worshiped him. We do not meet him again until his walk-on part in Homeric epic many centuries later. Here his major myths were so firmly established that a poet could allude briefly to a narrative in the Dionysiac repertory and assume with confidence that audiences would be familiar with its content.

Dionysus is already a complicated god in early epic. He is capable of revenge, his divine status is difficult to recognize, and he is associated with an ambiguous gift. When Odysseus notices Ariadne in the underworld, he says that it was the testimony of Dionysus that led Artemis to kill her (*Odyssey* 11.321–325). We can assume that Dionysus was aggressive here, but the rest of the story is no longer available to us. In the *Iliad* Dionysus reacts to danger with fear (*Iliad* 6.128–42). When Lykourgos attacks him and his followers, Dionysus trembles in terror and leaps into the sea, where he is drawn to Thetis for comfort. Dionysus is linked with Thetis again in the last book of the *Odyssey*. When Agamemnon arrives in the underworld, he tells the dead Achilles how the Greeks at Troy placed his ashes in a golden amphora for burial, reminding him that the amphora, made by Hephaestus, had been a gift to his mother from Dionysus (*Odyssey* 24.73–5).

Official Dionysiac cult grew with the developing polis, and Dionysiac rituals were well integrated into local festival calendars of Greek cities at an early date (Samuel 1972:285, 283, 297). The month names Anthesterion, named for the Anthesteria,

and Lenaion, for the Lenaia, were common throughout the cities of the Cyclades, Ionia, and the Ionian colonies. Agrionos, named for the Agrionia (''wild-like'' rituals), was common in Doric areas, in Boeotia, and in Thessaly. Thuios (named for the Thuia, ''raving women'' rituals) was common in the Peloponnese and Thessaly. Dionysus moved north with Greek colonization. He was taken to Thasos from Paros, to Abdera from Teos, and to Olbia from Miletos. At both Teos and Abdera the Dionysiac rituals called Anthesteria constituted one of the three major festivals of the polis. At Olbia an inscription with a complete calendar of the months reproduces the Milesian calendar and confirms that both cities originally celebrated the same festivals. Herodotus makes it clear that the Bacchic rites practiced at Olbia were Greek rites imported from Miletos and despised by the local indigenous population (4.78). His information about solemn Bacchic rites, *teletai*, is confirmed by several recent finds at Olbia, among them a bronze mirror of the sixth century BC inscribed with a Dionysiac theophoric name together with the Bacchic ritual cry used by females, *euai* (Dubois 1996:143–6 no. 92). The evidence for Dionysus in Ionia is especially rich. In later periods Dionysiac inscriptions tend to be thickly clustered in the Greek cities along the Ionian coast and to thin out considerably as one proceeds inland. In the coastal cities inscriptions testify to public organization of his priesthoods as part of the city administration and public organization of his festivals as part of the regular festival calendar. Inland, where the institutions of the polis developed later, Dionysus is not always a polis divinity and rarely appears in public documents. His impact in inland areas is limited to private dedications, sepulchral texts, and the records generated by private organizations.

Experiencing Dionysus

In Euripides' *Bacchae* the women of Thebes, compelled to dance in the mountains for Dionysus, are called *mainades*, ''mad women.'' E.R. Dodds interpreted this noun as a ritual title and the plot of the play as a historical account of a religious movement (Dodds 1960:xv, xx–xxii). He described *oreibasia* as a series of rites where women roamed the mountains and actually tore apart wild animals (*sparagmos*). Dodds presents *sparagmos* as preparation for a sacrifice where the worshiper ate the flesh of the sacrificial victim raw, *ōmophagia*. His interpretation, delivered with fervor in the introduction to his deservedly admired commentary on Euripides' play, still convinces some, but it is not clear that ''maenad'' was a ritual title or that spontaneous attacks of frenzy incited females to mass exodus to the mountains for dancing and the rending of wild animals (Henrichs 1978). Rather, the myths of resistance describing excessive frenzy inflicted by a punitive Dionysus show the dangers of refusing to honor the god and therefore explain the local rituals designed to meet his approval.

It is important to notice that there are two different groups of ''maenads'' in Euripides' play, the women who accompany the god from Asia, successfully performing his solemn rituals, *teletai*, and the women of Thebes, harshly punished for refusing to recognize him as a god. Euripides also distinguishes two kinds of *mania*, ''madness.'' The first is the positive ritual experience of identification with the god as described by the Chorus of Lydian *Bakkhai* when it enters the orchestra. The second is

the transgressive and frenzied behavior inflicted by the god on the three daughters of Kadmos and their cohorts, the corrupt and polluted *Bakkhai*.

The first Bacchic experience is induced by willing participation in *teletai* and *orgia*, where the worshiper yields to union with Dionysus and achieves simultaneous spiritual community with the Bacchic group (*thiaseuetai psukhan*: Euripides, *Bacchae* 75). In this process Dionysus (also called Bromios) is the one who decides. As Herodotus puts it when describing the effects of Bacchic *teleltai* on Skyles, the Scythian king, Dionysus "takes hold of" (*lambanei*) the one performing Bacchic ritual (4.79). The second experience, described in Euripides' *Bacchae* by the messenger, first to Pentheus (675–774) and then to the horrified Chorus (1043–1152), is something else altogether. It is a painful affliction. The first is enacted in a regular ritual celebrated every two years (*trietērides*: *Bacchae* 33); the second is inflicted as a divine punishment in which Dionysiac *mania* is no longer the result of communal ritual, but a consequence of delusion controlled by the god. "To the mountain, to the mountain [*eis oros, eis oros*]" is a ritual cry used by Euripides, but it is only the second group of mad women that actually climbs Mount Kithairon.

Interpreting Resistance

Dionysus is so difficult to pin down because he is ever on the move and always in a perennial state of arrival and epiphany (Detienne 1989a:6–10; Otto 1965:71–80). On Attic vases Dionysus traveling with a grapevine is paired with Triptolemos, the Eleusinian hero who carried Demeter's gift of grain throughout the world (Schwarz 1987). Bread and wine were considered the basic components of a civilized diet, and Dionysus and Demeter were recognized in ritual for providing these gifts to all. Dionysus should have been welcomed everywhere, but wine was a problematic gift and Dionysus was considered a foreign newcomer.

Myths of local resistance to the rites of Dionysus fit a standard pattern. One plot focuses on females. Insult to the god's divine status leads to punishment of a king's daughters by inflicting them with madness and inciting them to leave their weaving and their children to rave in the mountains. Dionysus can infect those who challenge him with madness so strong that they even tear their own children apart. This is the plot of stories told about the daughters of Kadmos at Thebes (Euripides, *Bacchae*); the daughters of Minyas at Orchomenos (Plutarch, *Greek Questions* 38); the daughters of Eleuther at Eleutherai (*Suda*, "Melan"); and the daughters of Proitos at Argos (Apollodorus, *Library* 2.2.2).

Another plot targets males. In one version Dionysus arrives in Attica from Thebes by the route over Mount Kithairon and through the pass at Eleutherai. Continuing to Ikaria, he is received by Ikarios, to whom he gives a vine branch. In one version, Ikarios learns to make wine and shares it with a group of shepherds. They drink up the wine without diluting it with water and become very drunk. Believing that they have been poisoned, they kill Ikarios. When his daughter Erigone finds his body, she hangs herself (Apollodorus, *Library* 3.14.7). The story illustrates the danger of wine to a society not yet ready to manage its consumption.

In both story patterns Dionysus appears to be a threat to community, but evidence for his worship tells us otherwise. The Delphic oracle promoted Dionysus more than

any other divinity, and myths of resistance to the arriving Dionysus have their counterpart in the rituals designed to receive him. Ionian cities welcomed Dionysus in springtime at the *Katagōgia*, the festival during which they "led the god down" from the ship that brought him and then carried him in procession throughout the city (Tassignon 2003:81–94). In Attica, as a prelude to the Dionysia, a *xoanon*, a small, portable statue of the god, was taken from the temple of Dionysus to the Academy. When it was carried back to the area of the theater, the procession into the city guaranteed the presence of the god, marked the beginning of the Dionysia, and replayed the conclusion of the god's original arrival in Attica (Pickard-Cambridge 1968:59–60).

The Gaze of Dionysus

Wine was the original primary concern of Dionysiac ritual. At Corinth large concentrations of seventh-century drinking cups decorated with Dionysiac imagery reflect an early emphasis on organized communal drinking (Isler-Kerényi 1993:3–5). The explosive increase in pottery associated with serving and drinking wine in sixth-century Athens is related to the same phenomenon. Dionysus and his entourage are the most popular figures on black-figure vases of the sixth century, a time of political innovation and social experimentation. One of the most successful of those experiments was the institution of the symposium. In a period of rapid political change, the symposium provided a protected arena to test new political status. Dionysus was a component of this process, and his ambiguous nature is one of the issues explored in the images on pottery.

Dionysus appears on extant Attic black-figure vases in early scenes displaying the procession of the gods to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. For Sophilos, who depicts the god carrying a vine branch, Dionysus is the god of wine. Kleitias, who portrays a more complex divinity, presents Dionysus twice, once in procession for the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, and a second time, leading Hephaestus to Olympos (Florence 4209, the François vase; *LIMC* iii.2 pls 496, 567; Carpenter 1986: pls. 1b, 4a; Cristofani, Marzi, and Perissinotto 1981: pls 82, 91–2). Dionysus is a central figure in both friezes. Wine is the powerful weapon that puts Hephaestus under the god's spell. Dionysus strides in procession with his followers (labeled on the vase as *silēnoi*, but usually called "satyrs"). One of these carries over his shoulder a large wineskin almost bursting with its excessive load of wine. Dionysus is followed by the drunken Hephaestus straddling a mule, an animal part-donkey and, like the *silēnoi*, part-horse. Hephaestus is drunk, and the mule and the *silēnoi* are in a state of openly displayed high sexual excitement. Dionysus himself, shown in profile, is the only one who exhibits self-control.

In the wedding procession on the other side of the vase Dionysus is the only divinity who walks alone. He carries a large amphora on his shoulder and is shown this time not in profile, but in full frontal view, his face like a mask staring directly at the viewer (illustrated clearly in Carpenter 1997a: pl. 38A; Henrichs 1987: 95 fig. 1; Isler-Kerényi 1997: pl. 15.1). The wedding of Achilles' parents was an appropriate opportunity for giving gifts, but it was also an episode in the sequence of events that led to the Trojan War. If the amphora Dionysus carries here refers to the golden amphora

that received Achilles' bones (for discussion, Henrichs 1987:94–5, 113–14 nn. 12–14; Isler-Kerényi 1997:78–9), there is a sinister meaning in the god's pose. Dionysus faces the viewer head on, and the amphora is slightly tipped. This instability and the god's frontal stare mark both his presence and his gift as potentially dangerous to those who are not careful.

The amphora was a vessel used to transport wine. When diluted with water and correctly shared and consumed according to the rules of organized drinking, wine brought relaxation and encouraged pleasant and orderly conversation (see Henrichs 1982:140–1, for the benefits of wine), whether in a private home or in the *prutaneion*, the dining room of the city. These conditions encouraged a shared male culture and enabled the interchange necessary for political and intellectual life. Wine, however, like Dionysus himself, could also be both seductive and destructive (see Detienne 1989a:33–40, 50, for the risks). By isolating Dionysus and showing him in full frontal view in the center of the main frieze, Kleitias converts the image into a medallion. Like the Gorgon on Athena's shield, Dionysus issues a challenge. His pose calls attention to the benefits of his gift as well as the possible risks of abusing wine. If not managed by ritual, wine could threaten the community that made the polis possible (Isler-Kerényi 1993:8–9).

Frontal views are not common in Greek vase painting, but when they do occur they are displayed in clearly defined contexts and carry a special meaning (Korshak 1987 collects 255 examples). The majority of the figures shown full face on Greek vases are connected to Dionysus or associated with wine. Satyrs alone are 40 percent of the total. They greatly outnumber all other subjects, and black-figure satyrs outnumber red. Satyrs are imaginary creatures, part-human, part-horse. They are bald but bearded, nude but hairy, their bodies undersized, their genitals often enormous. They are highly sexed, easily excitable, and impossible to control, yet unable to achieve sexual satisfaction (Henrichs 1987; Lissarague 1990b). They inhabit remote, wooded areas in the mountains; they do not belong in town.

Most of the depictions of black-figure satyrs in full frontal view show them engaged in frenetic dancing or wine production and consumption. Red-figure satyrs are fewer in number, but their counterparts are now drunken symposiasts. Full frontal view on red-figure vases, sometimes accompanied by vomiting, indicates that a drinker has given himself over to the power of wine, the result of imitating satyrs in the rule-bound environment of the symposium. Aristocratic bias and, after Solon, contempt for the newly enfranchised infect the images, but there is also humor in the presentation of the transgressive behavior of those who drink too much (Sutton 2000:180–1; 199–201). Nevertheless, drunkenness is out of place in the formal symposium, the male institution for controlling the effects of wine. Drunken behavior is an insult to the god and an impediment to social interaction. Dionysus offers consumers the opportunity to abuse his gift, because it is up to the drinker to moderate consumption in order to maintain both sobriety and mental and social equilibrium.

Altered States

The theme uniting the majority of the full frontal figures is transition to an altered state. The activities that effect this transition are: (1) frenetic dancing; (2) playing the

aulos (double flute) or listening to music; (3) excessive wine-drinking; (4) losing a physical contest; (5) sleep; and (6) death (Frontisi-Ducroux 1995:81–132 divides the Dionysiac frontal images into sleep and death; the symposium; satyrs; and females as object of the male gaze). The full frontal face compels attention. There is no gaze when the eyes are closed in sleep or death, but even closed eyes do not dilute the impact of the full face, ominous because the situations where it appears are so unstable. Even among a crowd of figures, it is normally only one head that turns toward the viewer. A scene showing the dismemberment of Pentheus, however, provides a rare example of two figures in full frontal view on the same side of the vase. Here, among a group of dancing women in profile, two women move in dance, faces turned outward, unaware that what they have in their hands is pieces of Pentheus' torn body (*LIMC* vii, pl. 259; Carpenter 1997a: pl. 42A–B; Frontisi-Ducroux 1995: pl. 70).

Dionysus is associated with four of the six principal categories of transition to altered states: frenetic dancing, wine, sleep, and death. His followers, the satyrs and nymphs who give themselves over to violent dancing, do so because they are susceptible to his power. The isolated dancing female displayed full face among others in profile risks giving way to a trance so powerful that she may not be able to throw it off by herself. For females excluded from the symposium, frenetic dancing is a substitute for wine-drinking and a means of reaching Dionysus. The god is responsible for the trance, and he is also responsible for its release. Worshipers need him for both transitions.

For females exhausted by dancing, sleep is an antidote for exertion, but Dionysus must give his support to secure the process. The sleep of Ariadne under the influence of Dionysus is explored first in red-figure vase painting (McNally 1985). Ariadne appears sleeping in frontal view as she is about to lose Theseus (*ARV*^{2} 560; McNally 1985: pl. iii, fig. 4). The sleep of Ariadne is the sleep of the *Bakkhai* recovering from the exertion of ritual. When the messenger in Euripides' *Bacchae* goes up the mountain to look for the Theban women possessed by Dionysus, he finds them draped over rocks and foliage, sleeping in exhaustion from the intensity of their experience (*Bacchae* 683–94). Similar scenes are depicted on red-figure vases, where solitary females worn out from dancing are caught in deep sleep out in the open countryside, exposed, unprotected, and in danger of sexual interference by satyrs. Sleep is the transitional state that can restore the exhausted worshiper to normal consciousness, but restoration also depends on Dionysus as Lusios, "Releaser." The mad women on the mountain in Euripides' *Bacchae* are prevented from recovery when their sleep is interrupted by Agave's piercing *ololugē* (a shrill ritual cry). Dionysus will not permit them to awaken until they have torn Pentheus apart.

A story about a group of Delphic Thuiades replicates the pattern. As Plutarch tells it, the Thuiades celebrating the winter rites of Dionysus on Parnassus lost their way at night while raving (*ekmaineisai*) for the god and ended up at Amphissa. Exhausted and unable to think clearly, they fell asleep in the agora. The women of Amphissa, anxious about the threat posed by soldiers billeted in the town and recognizing the therapeutic power of deep sleep, ran out and stood guard in silence until the Thuiades awoke (Plutarch, *The Virtues of Women* 249e–f). The women of Amphissa protected the Thuiades from more than the soldiers; they also rescued the women from the dangers of interrupted ritual.

Ritual Performance

Dionysiac ritual is a ritual of performance where worshipers play the parts of characters in Dionysiac narratives, whether the scene is set outdoors in the countryside or in the heart of the city. Dionysus himself is impresario. He energizes the set, animates the costumes, and inspires the action. As Diodorus says, the women who served Dionysus imitated the raving women who accompanied Dionysus in the ancient stories (4.3.3). Official groups, like the Thuiades at Delphi and Olympia, the Athenian women who joined the Thuiades at Delphi to dance on Parnassus (Pausanias 10.4.2), or the Agriades in the Peloponnese, performed ritual dances that imitated the wild dancing of their imaginary counterparts. They carried the *thursos* and wore the costumes of the *mainades*: the long, light, pleated *khitōn* or the long-sleeved pleated versions with elbow sleeves that covered the hands, the *nebris* (fawn skin), the *pardeleē*, (leopard skin), and in Thrace, the *bassara*, a costume made of fox skins. They knew the music and they memorized the correct, stylized motions of the dance.

At Sicyon sacred paraphernalia were kept in the *kosmētērion*, a dressing room in a sanctuary of Dionysus near the theater. Stone statues of Dionysus and *Bakkhai* stood outside the nearby temple of Dionysus for all to see. Special images were kept hidden in a place not to be revealed. One night in the year these images were brought from the *kosmētērion* to the temple in a procession lit by torches and accompanied by the singing of hymns (Pausanias 2.7.5–6). Ritual paraphernalia and costumes stored in the *kosmētērion* would have been used to equip and clothe those eligible to perform the Dionysiac ritual.

Dionysus himself could be represented by his costume (usually a *khitōn* and *himation*) together with his mask or even by his mask alone. On red-figure pottery women celebrate wine under an image of Dionysus that is simply a figured garment wrapped around a pole capped with a mask facing the viewer (Peirce 1998:80–4). The same word, *prosōpon*, meant both "face" and "mask," and the face of Dionysus was powerful in itself (Frontisi-Ducroux 1991:66–85; 189–201; Henrichs 1993:36–9). At Corinth two wooden statues (*xoana*; Pausanias 2.4.7) had faces painted red and bodies covered in gold. These two statues represented a double Dionysus: Bakkheios, "Raving with Bacchic *mania*" and Lusios, "Releaser." At Megara there was a wooden statue of Dionysus covered up except for its face (Pausanias 1.43.5), and when fishermen at Methymna hauled up from the sea a mask of Dionysus made of olive wood, the Delphic oracle advised the people to worship Dionysus as a *prosōpon* (Pausanias 10.19.3).

Dionysus is a god who plays many roles, and he can change his appearance at will. As god of the theater, he is associated with the process of transition actors undergo when taking on a new role, because the actor puts on a new identity with each new mask (Bassi 1998:192–244; Henrichs 1993:38 n.66). In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* the playwright Agathon says that to write successful tragedies, the dramatist must identify with his characters. To write about women, a writer should wear a woman's clothing and experience a woman's habits (148–52). Dionysus had the power to change from one identity to another, and such transitions were also part of the Bacchic experience for his worshipers, both actors and spectators. Dionysus himself, who received the dedications of prizewinners, was part of the theatrical

process of *mimēsis*. The giant *phallos* displayed in the theater before the dramas began prepared the site for spectators to view the plays (Cole 1993a:29–34).

Gender and Dionysiac Ritual

Dionysiac rituals for women were organized by the city or deme and scheduled in official ritual calendars. At Delphi, where the festival was called Thuia, the Thuiades had regular ritual responsibilities (Villaneuva Puig 1986). Pausanias says that they "raved" on the Corycian heights of Parnassus for Apollo and Dionysus (10.32.7), but in fact, their "raving" was officially scheduled to take place in winter every two years.

Officially sponsored festivals often distinguished ritual for females from ritual for males. At Elis the split was spatial as well as based on gender. Here, women called Thuiai engaged in ecstatic dancing at the Thuia for Dionysus at his temple near the theater. Males celebrated wine at a little sanctuary of Dionysus out of town (Schlesier 2002; Scullion 2001). Elsewhere, female worshipers of Dionysus celebrated nocturnal rites that excluded males. They beat drums, performed wild dances (Bremmer 1984), and banqueted together on sacrificial meat.

The evidence for actual Bacchic rites exclusively for females is sparse. An exception is the fourth-century calendar of sacrifices found in the rural Attic deme of Erchia, listing annual sacrifices to Dionysus and Semele for the women of the deme (Sokolowski 1969: no. 18; Henrichs 1990:260–4). The costs were funded by local liturgy: 12 drachmas to purchase the goat for Dionysus and 10 drachmas to purchase the goat for Semele. The meat could not be taken away from the sanctuary, but had to consumed on the spot. The women, therefore, practiced conventional sacrifice, *thusia*, followed by a ritual banquet. A stone from Methymna preserves a *lex sacra* that regulates an all-night ceremony (*pannukhis*) in a sanctuary where no men were allowed (Sokolowski 1969: no. 127, probably fourth century BC). Because the text mentions *thursoi*, the all-night rituals must have been in honor of Dionysus. Most of the extant fragment is devoted to the requirements for the *gunaikonomos*, a male publicly appointed to supervise the women at the event. He had to be at least 40 years old and a citizen of Methymna. His primary responsibility was to guard the double doors to the sanctuary and to see to it that no male entered.

Literary sources indicate a variety of local rites, but nothing specifically "maenadic." At Chaironeia, the women acted out a search for Dionysus before taking part in a sacrifice that was followed by a feast during which they told riddles (Plutarch, *Greek Questions* 717a). At Brysiai in the Peloponnese the women, with no males present, performed a sacrifice to Dionysus so sacred that it was wrong even to speak about it (Pausanias 3.20.4). Men could view the *agalma* (statue) of the god outside the temple, but only women could look at the *agalma* inside. On the road from the eastern frontier of Lakonia to Sparta there was a precinct of a local hero adjacent to a sanctuary of Dionysus. Two groups of females, eleven Dionysiades and eleven Leukippides, offered the first sacrifice to the hero because he had shown the god the way to Sparta (Pausanias 3.13.7).

Women participated in traditional ritual activities for Dionysus. They erected statues of themselves and made dedications in sanctuaries. Fathers, husbands, and

sons offered statues of their daughters, wives, or mothers who had served as priestess for Dionysus. Men and women made dedications to Dionysus together, and women also made dedications alone. Simo of Erythrai, a priestess of Dionysus "Protector of the Polis," said in her dedication that she wanted to be remembered by her children and descendants (*IErythrai* 201a). Males, however, were more likely than females to be mentioned in epigraphical texts. This bias inevitably distorts any discussion of gender in Dionysiac cult. The evidence from Thasos is a good example. At Thasos an unpublished inscription addresses Dionysus as "Lord of the Maenads" (Daux 1967:172, presented in French translation only). Although the sacred enclosure "covered with vines" mentioned in the text seems intended for rites involving mixed groups, all Bacchic worshipers on Thasian membership lists are male.

At Athens exclusively male rituals for Dionysus were organized around wine-drinking and the theater. Several Athenian festivals highlighted grapes and the making of wine: Lenaia, Anthesteria, Oschophoria, Theoinia, and Iobakkheia, but the Anthesteria are the only rituals whose events can be reasonably reconstructed. Scheduled to coincide with the earliest hint of spring, the Anthesteria celebrated the first tasting of the previous year's vintage. A sanctuary of Dionysus Limnaios was opened one day in the year for this event. The three-day festival included several different celebrations. On the first day, the Pithoigia, the storage jars, *pithoi*, were opened for the tasting of the wine. The second day, Khoes, was a day that began with preparations against pollution and ended with each adult male drinking a pitcher (*khous*, pl. *khoes*) of wine in silence. Fear of pollution was justified because this was a day when ghosts of the dead could return. The third day was called Khutrai, "Pots," in honor of the simple earthenware pots used for cooking the *panspermia,* a porridge made up of all sorts of grains. This was a simple meal, without meat, to restore the city to a normal state once the dead were back where they belonged.

Respectable women were not encouraged to drink wine, yet certain qualified females presided over wine rituals during festivals at Athens. At the Lenaia it now seems that women participated in a sacrifice followed by a banquet where they entertained Dionysus in a mock symposium and shared in the wine themselves (Peirce 1998). At the Anthesteria the priestess of Dionysus served wine, and the Basilinna, wife of the Basileus, took part in a skit that must have represented renewal for the city. She waited in the *boukoleion* in the agora to receive Dionysus himself in sexual union. No one knows what actually took place, but the Basileus probably played, in costume, the part of the god (Parke 1977:112). The sexual status of the women who performed public ritual during the Anthesteria was open to scrutiny. The Basilinna herself had to be in her first marriage and a virgin at the time of her wedding. The fourteen Gerarai, "Venerable Women," who assisted the Basilinna, had to swear an oath of purity before her to demonstrate that they were qualified to preside at the fourteen altars in the sanctuary ([Demosthenes] 59.73–9).

Balancing Public and Private

In the opening lines of Aristophanes' play in her name, Lysistrata is the only one who arrives on time for her scheduled meeting. She complains that if the other women had

been invited to take part in a Bacchic revel (*bakkheion*) they would not have been late, and the street would already have been full of tambourines (*Lysistrata* 1–3). Lysistrata's complaint is the only surviving reference we have to an exclusively female celebration of Dionysus at Athens. It is important to notice, moreover, that she describes a ritual by appointment, one neither spontaneous nor scheduled in the official calendar.

Most Dionysiac rituals specifically for women were actually part of the public cult system and administered by local governments, but sometimes it was difficult to draw the line between public and private events. The overlap of public and private is an administrative issue in a hellenistic text from Miletos. As part of a job description issued when the priestess assumed office, the city issued a statement about the privileges and responsibilities of the priestess of Dionysus:

> whenever the priestess performs the sacrifices for the sake of the whole city, it is not possible for anyone to throw in a victim to be eaten raw [*ōmophagion*] before the priestess throws one in for the sake of the whole city. Nor is it possible for anyone to conduct a *thiasos* ahead of the public one. But if any man or woman wishes to offer sacrifice to Dionysus, let the one who sacrifices designate whichever of the two he wishes to preside and let the designated official receive the perquisites ... [*section on schedule of fees*]
> ... and the priestess is to give to women ... and to provide the equipment for the women in all the celebrations. And if any woman wishes to sacrifice to Dionysus, let her give as perquisites to the priestess the *splankhna*, the kidneys, the intestine, the consecrated portion, the tongue, and the leg cut off as far as the hip joint.
> And if any woman wishes to perform initiations for Dionysus Bakkhios in the polis or in the *khōra* or in the islands, let her give to the priestess a *statēr* (gold coin) every *trietēris*.
> And at the Katagōgia the priests and priestesses of Dionysus Bakkhios are to bring Dionysus down from the sea with the priest and priestess before day until the setting of the sun ... of the city ... (Jaccottet 2003:2.148–50 no. 150; 277–276 BC)

The office of the priestess was controlled by the polis, the ritual described in the first sentence takes place in town, and is performed "for the sake of the polis." The public (*dēmosios*) *thiasos* must be allowed to take the lead. Private groups organized to worship Dionysus that wanted to participate had to recognize the authority of both the polis and the public *thiasos*. This text gives us the only epigraphical example of the word *ōmophagion*, "victim eaten raw," a term heavy with Euripidean resonance, but the raw meat from the sacrificial victim is not eaten by the worshipers. Rather, it is tossed into something, most likely a *megaron*, a subterranean pit for depositing items in sacrifice (Henrichs 1978:133). The raw meat is owed to Dionysus himself, on Lesbos known as "Raw-Eater," *Ōmēstēs* (Alcaeus fr. 129 Voigt).

A tomb epigram gives the name of one of the priestesses of Dionysus at Miletos:

> Official *Bakkhai* of the polis, bid farewell to your sacred priestess; this is the right thing to do for a good woman. She led you to the mountain, and she carried all the sacrificial equipment and sacred things, passing in procession before the whole city. Her name was Alkmeionis, daughter of Rhodios; she knew her share of the blessings. (*IMiletos* 2.733: the translation follows Henrichs 1978:148)

At Miletos a hierarchy of women served Dionysus. The main polis priestess of Dionysus was at the top, and the suburban and rural priestesses were under her administration. Taking the two texts together, we can see that the duties of the main city priestess included presiding over sacrifices (both public and private), managing the equipment for Bacchic celebrations, leading the city's *Bakkhai* to the mountain, taking part in a public procession for the whole city, managing the women who performed initiation ceremonies in the city's territory, and participating in the *Katagōgia* for Dionysus. At Kos the priestess of Dionysus Thyllophoros also mediated between the city administration and local groups of female worshipers. The priestess here appointed a subordinate priestess in each deme, and it was not possible for any other woman to perform initiations (or, more accurately, "perform special rites") for Dionysus Thyllophoros. If the priestess found that anyone had not followed the rules, her *kurios* had to report the woman to the local council (Sokolowski 1969: no. 166, 24–30, 67–8). Clearly the city administration at Kos assumed that small private groups of women were in need of oversight when the issue was a Bacchic celebration.

Dionysus and the Dead

A gold-clad bronze krater of the fourth century BC, excavated at Derveni in Macedonia, is reminiscent of the golden amphora of Thetis. Both were vessels for holding wine and both were used to collect ashes from cremation. The Macedonian krater is decorated with a continuous frieze of Dionysiac images in high relief. Scenes around the belly of the vase include Dionysus himself and Ariadne with satyrs and maenads in a wild dance. Two *Bakkhai* sit on the shoulder of the vase, both sunk in deep sleep, each paired with a vigilant satyr. The same Lykourgos who attacked Dionysus in the *Iliad* appears in the frieze, raving here with a terrible madness imposed by the god (Gioure 1978: pls 11–16). Completely out of his mind, Lykourgos prepares to dismember his own little son, held aloft by an ankle in the grasp of a frenzied *Bakkhē*. The scene tells us that the punishment of Dionysus is terrible and that Lykourgos suffered what he deserved, but why would anyone choose to be buried in a vase decorated with a scene like this?

The answer to this question begins in Hipponion, a small Greek city in the very south of Italy, where a tiny gold tablet inscribed with instructions for reaching the world of the dead was found in the grave of a woman in 1969. The text, dated about 400 BC, only a little earlier than the Derveni krater, gives detailed instructions for a scripted performance by the soul when confronted by the guardians of the underworld:

> This is the task of Memory; when you are about to die ...
> [line missing?]
> into the broad halls of Hades, there is to the right a spring:
> and standing next to it a white cypress tree;
> arriving down there, the souls of the dead grow cold.
> Do not go near this spring at all.

> But in front of it you will find the cold water flowing forth
> from the lake of Memory; and guardians pass above.
> But they will surely ask you, with their crowded thoughts,
> for what reason you seek out the darkness of dank Hades.
> Say: "I am the child of Earth and Starry Sky,
> and I am parched with thirst and I am perishing.
> But give me quickly cold water to drink from the lake of Memory."
> And above all, they will announce you to the king under the earth.
> And above all, they will give you to drink from the lake of Memory.
> And what is more, when you have drunk, you will travel a road, a sacred
> road, which other famous *mustai* and *bakkhoi* also tread.
>
> (from Riedweg 1998:395–6)

More than forty related Greek texts inscribed on gold tablets are known. Two identical tablets recently found at Pelinna, cut in the shape of ivy leaves, speak of Dionysus Lusios, "Dionysus the Releaser":

> Now you died and now you were born, thrice blessed one, on this day,
> Tell Phersephona that the Bacchic one himself has released you.
> A bull, you leapt into the milk;
> Suddenly, you leapt into the milk;
> A ram, you fell into the milk.
> You shall have wine as your blessed honor.
> And ritual celebrations await you under the earth, and all the other blessed ones too.
>
> (from Riedweg 1998:392)

The tablets from Hipponion and Pelinna now confirm that the whole corpus should be considered together under a single Dionysiac umbrella. Dionysus is concerned with the soul's last journey to the world of the dead because, as a god of transitions, he bridges life and death. For the soul after death Plato describes a journey with two possible routes (*Gorgias* 523a–524a; *Republic* 614b–621d). The route to the left leads down beneath the earth to suffering, the route to the right leads to up to light and a vision of beauty (*Republic* 614c–616a). In Plato's accounts the soul must face judgment. The gold tablets prepare the soul for a decision by providing a script. The titles *mustai* and *bakkhoi* in the Hipponion tablet assume prior preparation through ritual. Plato's description of ritual madness, *telestikē mania*, suggests the components of that ritual:

> Madness, springing up and making prophecies to those for whom it was necessary, secured release from the greatest diseases and sufferings at one time arising from ancient causes of wrath in some of the families, having recourse to prayers and worship of the gods, whence, encountering purifications and *teletai*, it made healthy the one who had it for the present and for the future, finding release from the present evils for the one who rightly rages and is possessed. (*Phaedrus* 244d)

Plato associates *telestikē mania* with Dionysus (*Phaedrus* 265b), the god who also provides release. Induced by *katharmoi*, "purifications," and *teletai*, "solemn and

special rites,'' *telestikē mania* is a beneficial *mania* with long-lasting results for the one who ''rightly raves and is possessed.'' *Telestikē mania* of those who rightly rave implies the other *mania*, the destructive madness inflicted by Dionysus on those who abuse him. At Cumae in southern Italy a chamber tomb was reserved for those who had experienced Bacchic rites (Sokolowski 1962: no. 120, perhaps as early as the fifth century BC). The posted inscription implies that those already in the tomb considered themselves to be in a special category and did not want to compromise the purity they had achieved through special Bacchic ritual.

The gold tablets, found throughout the Mediterranean from Macedonia to Crete and from the Aegean to Italy (Cole 2003:202–3), provide evidence for a widely scattered constituency of Bacchic worshipers who performed Dionysiac *teletai* in preparation for death. The texts on the tablets exhibit so much variation in formulae that content must have circulated orally. The rituals these texts assume seem to have been spread by freelance practitioners, people like Aeschines' mother, who performed *teletai* of Dionysus Sabazios in her own home (Demosthenes 18.259–60) or like the *Orpheotelestai*, ''those who perform rites of Orpheus,'' mentioned by Theophrastus (*Characters* 16.11). Plato criticizes independent purveyors of religious ritual (*Republic* 2.364c), but bone tablets found at Olbia, on the north shore of the Black Sea, indicate how far their message could reach. Three of the bone tablets are inscribed: ''Life Death Life; Truth; Dio[nysos]; Orphikoi,'' ''Peace War; Truth Lie; Dion[ysos],'' ''Dion[ysos] Truth; Body Soul'' (Dubois 1996:154–5 no. 96; fifth century BC).

Some modern commentators identify the content of the gold tablets as ''Orphic'' (for instance, Graf 1993a and N. Robertson 2003). The Orphikoi (''followers of Orpheus'') at Olbia, with their interest in the opposition of body and soul, suggest a more complex situation than we can now evaluate (Burkert 1993:259–60), but there is no reason to identify Bacchic *teletai* as ''Orphic.'' In his essay on the soul Aristotle is careful to refer to Orphic poetry as ''the poetry *called* Orphic'' (*On the Soul* 410b28). If anything could be called ''Orphic,'' it would be a particular type of myth concerned with cosmogony and theogony, but there is no hard evidence for Orphic ritual. Freelance practitioners (''itinerant charismatics,'' Burkert 1993:260), do not produce consistent or clearly stated doctrine, and even ancient commentators are wary of attaching labels to cult practice.

Bacchic *teletai* must have created bonds between participants, but we do not know how ties were maintained. The tiny gold tablets, found in graves of both males and females, are thickest in the fourth century and continue through the second century BC, with only a very few dated later. In the hellenistic and Roman periods, however, independent private organizations celebrating mysteries of Dionysus were springing up all around the Mediterranean. These Bacchic groups recognized no central ritual authority. Each local group handled its own organization, chose its own priests and officers, and managed its own budget. Individual status was based on a hierarchy of secret rites called *mustēria* or *teletai*, terms that should have implied serious and restricted rites. Inscriptions rank members according to categories with titles like *bakkhoi* or *bakkhai*, *bakkheastai*, *iobakkhoi*, *arkhibakkhos*, *mustai*, *summustai*, *arkhimustai*, *neomustai*, *arkhaios mustēs*, *thiaseitai*, *narthēkophoroi* (narthex-carriers), *thursophoroi* (*thursos*-bearers), or *boukoloi* (cowherds). Titles varied from place to place, and there were no rules about the actual content of local rites. Groups were called *thiasos*, *speira*, *bakkheion*, *bakkhikos thiasos*, or simply *Dionysiastai*. Some groups may

even have claimed ceremonies that guaranteed protection after death, but we cannot vouch for such a claim because gold tablets and Bacchic groups attested epigraphically do not occur together.

The people who took gold tablets to the grave were discreet. They did not need to advertise their ritual status on their tombstones. Reference to Bacchic *teletai* in epitaphs, therefore, is rare and ambiguous (Cole 1993b). The person whose ashes were buried in the gold-covered krater at Derveni claimed no special Bacchic status. The scene on the krater depicting Lykourgos raving with the wrong kind of Bacchic *mania* did not have to be made public because the eyes for which the scene was intended were not mortal. The subject was chosen by one who understood that those who had experienced the *telestikē mania* of Dionysus could expect to tread the road with the other *bakkhoi* and *mustai*. Having "rightly raved" in special ritual service to Dionysus, they "had been made healthy for the present and for the future."

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Carpenter and Faraone 1993 introduce modern scholarship on Dionysus. For the problems of understanding Dionysiac ritual, Henrichs 1978 and 1982 are fundamental. Otto 1965 (original edition 1933) is still the most engaging single-volume study. Seaford 1996 publishes Diggle's text (with modifications) of Euripides' *Bacchae* together with English translation and commentary designed for students. Dodds 1960[2] should not be ignored, and readers of Seaford will find much to ponder in Rainer 2000. Versnel 1990 includes a long chapter on Dionysus.

Le Guen 2001 and Aneziri 2003 collect and comment on the inscriptions concerning the Dionysiac Technitai, and Jaccottet 2003 has collected inscriptions of local Bacchic associations and their members. The essays in *L'Association dionysiaques* 1986 cover Dionysiac issues in the hellenistic and Roman periods.

Dionysiac iconography has been well served by Carpenter 1986 and 1997a, Frontisi-Ducroux 1991 and 1995, Hedreen 1992, Isler-Kerényi 2004, and Lissarague 1990b. Henrichs 1987 presents a well-balanced critical discussion of the problems of interpreting Dionysiac imagery.

For focused studies Casadio 1994 on the Argolid and Casadio 1999 on Corinth, Sicyon, and Troizen define local issues. R. Hamilton 1992 concentrates on the Anthesteria and collects the relevant the Greek texts.

Riedwig 1998 provides up-to-date, edited texts of ten of the gold tablets. For an introduction to the tablets, see Cole 2003 and Graf 1993a, and for the relation between Orphic mysteries and Dionysiac ritual, N. Robertson 2003. Lada-Richards 1999 argues that initiation ritual shaped Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and Edmonds 2004 discusses the gold tablets as records of personal belief and Bacchic ritual as a means of achieving a new identity. Burkert 1987a is crucial for analysis of Dionysiac mysteries. Merkelbach 1988 covers these mysteries in the Imperial period, providing a collection of relevant reliefs and mosaics.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Mysteries of Demeter and Kore

Kevin Clinton

There were many ancient Greek festivals that were called Mysteria (in English, "mysteries"), but the oldest known festival of this type and the most famous was celebrated in Athens, the Mysteria of the Two Goddesses (Demeter and Kore). It was held in a sanctuary at Eleusis, about 14 miles west of the center of the city, by the shore opposite the island of Salamis. Today we refer to this festival as the Eleusinian Mysteries, to distinguish it from the other mystery festivals in the Greco-Roman world. One of its legacies, mediated through Plato and Platonism, is the mystery language of Christianity: terms like "mystical," "mysticism," "mystagogical," etc. all go back ultimately to the Eleusinian and other ancient mystery cults.

The Eleusinian Mysteria call to mind many things, but they were especially well known for their secrecy. The penalty for divulging these secrets was death. Indeed, these secrets are thought to rank among the best-kept secrets of the ancient world. George Mylonas, the distinguished Greek archaeologist who had been involved with the excavations at Eleusis since the 1930s, had this to say about the Mysteria in 1961:

> For years, since my early youth, I have tried to find out what the facts were. Hope against hope was spent against the lack of monumental evidence; the belief that inscriptions would be found on which the Hierophants had recorded their ritual and its meaning has faded completely; the discovery of a subterranean room filled with the archives of the cult, which dominated my being in my days of youth, is proved an unattainable dream since neither subterranean rooms nor archives for the cult exist at Eleusis; the last Hierophant carried with him to the grave the secrets which had been transmitted orally for untold generations, from the one high priest to the next. A thick, impenetrable veil indeed still covers securely the rites of Demeter and protects them from the curious eyes of modern students. How many nights and days have been spent over books, inscriptions, and works of art by eminent scholars in their effort to lift the veil! How many wild and ingenious theories have been advanced in superhuman effort to explain the Mysteries! How many nights have I spent standing on the steps of the Telesterion, flooded with the magic silver light of a Mediterranean moon, hoping to catch the mood of the

> initiates, hoping that the human soul might get a glimpse of what the rational mind could not investigate! All in vain – the ancient world has kept its secret well and the Mysteries of Eleusis remain unrevealed. (Mylonas 1961:281)

The matter, however, is not quite so desperate, as most scholars now would acknowledge. More, in fact, can be done with books, inscriptions, and works of art, in combination with facts revealed by the excavations at Eleusis, in order to produce at least an outline of what went on in the rite. First, it is important to consider the role of secrecy. A fragment of Aristotle gives us helpful perspective. He wrote: "The initiates are not supposed to learn anything but rather to experience and to be disposed in a certain way [*diatethēnai*], that is, becoming manifestly fit/deserving" (fr. 15 Rose). If the initiates are not supposed to learn anything, then knowledge of specific secrets is of much less significance than what Aristotle emphasizes here – the experience. The word which he uses to describe this experience, *pathein*, could mean just "to experience" or, more specifically, "to suffer." Secrecy was a characteristic of quite a few Greek cults, including women's cults. So, despite what the name Mysteria suggests to a person of our time, it was not secrecy that made the Mysteria truly special. In fact, originally the word Mysteria probably did not mean secrets; this is a meaning that it picked up much later, most likely because this one aspect of the cult, its secrecy, though originally not an essential one, eventually became legendary, in view of the penalty for divulging its details. Originally "Mysteria" must have indicated some significant aspect of the ritual; Greek festival names usually incorporated the name or epithet of the god honored in the festival (e.g. Dionysia, Diisoteria) or a reference to some significant ritual characteristic of the festival (e.g. Plynteria, Oschophoria, Panathenaea). A name meaning simply "secrets" would not differentiate this festival from other secret festivals. The term "Mysteria" is most likely related to the word for initiate, *mystēs*, which comes from the verb "to close" (*muein*) and should mean someone who is "closed," in this case with respect to his eyes, for the initiate was most likely blindfolded at the beginning of the rite, and had to be guided by a person called a *mystagogue* (Clinton 1992:86, 2003:50–1). The term *mystēs*, then, is just the opposite of the term used for an initiate who could participate in the Mysteria a year later, for a second stage of initiation: *epoptēs,* which means "one who sees" (i.e. does not have to wear a blindfold like the *mystēs*). So the very name *mystēs* suggests above all a special experience, which will involve the loss of sight. The festival name "Mysteria," then, points to the community of participants, the Mystai (initiates who were blinded), as Panathenaea points to "all Athenians." This is in line with Aristotle's description of the initiation as an *experience*.

We may then legitimately ask what actually was the point of the secrecy. But first one must consider what is so special about a secret. A secret is a fact or a representation of a human act that cannot be disclosed beyond a certain group. What could be so exciting about a fact or an act that could draw thousands of people from all over the Greek world each year to the Mysteria? Some of the Church Fathers thought it was the act of sexual intercourse performed by a priest and priestess. There is no credible evidence that this was the case, and it seems in principle highly unlikely that this act, even if hinted at by initiates to non-initiates, would have produced such widespread attraction. The attraction must rather have been the special religious

experience, a truly extraordinary experience (Burkert 1987a:89–114). The purpose of the secrecy was surely to help ensure that the experience was extraordinary. The nature of the experience, as we shall see, was such that it could easily be trivialized if it became public knowledge (Burkert 1983:252–3). When Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae* is asked by Pentheus whether his secret rites are held by night or day, the god replies, "Mainly by night, [for] darkness has solemnity" (486). The Eleusinian Mysteria were famous for their solemnity.

There is abundant evidence that the myth of the abduction of Kore, Demeter's daughter, played some role in the experience, though it is unlikely that the ritual could have presented dramatically the entire myth: the abduction of Kore by Hades and her becoming his wife, named in the underworld Persephone; Demeter's search for her; Demeter's arrival in Eleusis and her nursing the infant son of Queen Metaneira of Eleusis at night by dipping him in the hearth fire; the discovery of her by the queen; her causing the fields to turn barren; the negotiations between the gods and Hades to get Kore back to her mother; and the final return of Kore, though not a definitive return, because she has eaten of a pomegranate in the underworld, and has to return there annually for one-third of the year. The excavation of the sanctuary has shown that a journey to the underworld could not have been put on in the secret rite, and in fact the Telesterion is not a suitable venue for the presentation of a story such as the abduction of Kore (Mylonas 1961:268–9).

What part of the myth, then, did play a role in the cult? That is, how did the myth contribute to the experience? The most famous version of the myth is contained in the so-called *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. However, this version contradicts or is inconsistent with facts about the cult which are attested in historical documentary sources. Among other things it omits at least one important god and one important sacred place at Eleusis. It is striking how unreliable this version was for the Mysteria (Clinton 1986, 1992:13–14, 28–37). A somewhat different version, consistent with what we know from historical documentation about the cult, is provided in large part – strange as it may seem – by artistic representations, and it is to this version we must turn. However, one important piece of information pertaining to the Mysteria is provided at the very end of the *Homeric Hymn*, in the august description of Demeter's founding of the rites: "solemn rites which it is not possible to transgress or to learn about or to utter. For a great reverence for the gods holds back one's voice" (478–9). The Mysteria are referred to here for the first time, only at the very end of the poem. Demeter gives them to the Eleusinians as a great gift in an atmosphere of happiness and generosity occasioned by the return of Kore.

What this final part of the *Hymn* tells us about the Mysteria is important. It says: "Happy is he who has seen these things, but he who is not initiate in the rites, who does not share in them, he does not have a lot of like things when he is dead in the dank gloom" (480–2). And, a few lines later: "Greatly prosperous is he among mortal men whom these goddesses gladly love. Immediately they send to his great house at his hearth Ploutos [Wealth], who gives abundance to mortals" (486–9). Participation in the rites is characterized by *seeing*. But most important is the primary benefit that comes from seeing the Mysteria: the initiate gains a better position in the afterlife than the non-initiate. Highlighted also is the goddesses' other gift, the fruits of the fields, agrarian abundance, Ploutos.

Some of these same themes resurface in an important Athenian testimony written by the orator Isocrates in the fourth century BC. He of course emphasizes the intimate bond between the Mysteria and Athens (Clinton 1994):

> First of all, that which mankind first needed was provided by our city. For even if the story is mythical, nevertheless, it is fitting for it to be told even now. When Demeter arrived in our country, having wandered about after Kore was abducted, and was well disposed to our ancestors because of their kindnesses [*euergesiai*] which it is not possible for those who are not initiated to hear, and gave them double gifts, which happen to be the greatest – the fruits of the earth [*tous karpous*] which are responsible for the fact that we do not live like animals, and the festival [*tēn teletēn*], the participants in which have *sweeter hopes concerning the end of life* and all time [*tou sumpantos aiōnos*], our city was so reverent and generous [*philanthrōpōs*], that when it possessed such great good things it did not begrudge them to others but let all share in the things which it received. (Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 28)

Here too, in these words of Isocrates, it is implied that the initiates can expect better things for themselves in the afterlife than the uninitiated. And Isocrates emphasizes that these double gifts of Demeter – grain and the Mysteria – she gave first to Athens, and that Athens, in a spirit of civilizing generosity, handed them on to the rest of the Greek world. All this was represented in myth. The gift of the grain was transmitted to the Greeks by the Eleusinian hero Triptolemus, who in the course of his travels, while distributing the grain, invited the Greeks to the Mysteria (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.3.2–6). This tradition of announcing the festival continued in historical times, as Athens each year sent sacred ambassadors (*spondophoroi*) to the Greek cities to invite their inhabitants (men and women, slave and free, except for children) to the annual celebration (Clinton 1974:23), and gradually the ranks of the initiates were swelled more and more each year by Greeks who came from abroad. They came in the month of Boedromion, around the time of our September, and the festival took place over a period of nine days, from Boedromion 15th to 23rd. We do not have space here for a full description of all the events on these days, most of them public, many of them spectacular (Clinton 1993:116–19). On the 20th of the month, the initiates marched in a great procession to Eleusis (Clinton 1988); in the evening of the 21st they entered the sanctuary and took part in the secret rite; on the 22nd they celebrated with sacrifices; and on the 23rd they returned to their homes. So it was in the evening of the 21st that that the initiates entered and partook of an extraordinary experience in which a myth in dramatic form played a certain role. Isocrates says hardly anything about this myth. But there is another source of information, mentioned above, which has not been tapped as much as it might have been – artistic representations.

Certain Athenian vases, which display symbols of the Mysteria, give us mythical scenes which undoubtedly reflect, at least in a general way, the myth of the Mysteria. It would be difficult for a non-initiate to deduce much about the Mysteria from these scenes, but in combination with other clues, including information from the sanctuary, it is possible to make out the shape of the myth (Clinton 1992:73–84). The scenes appear on vases which were probably sold to initiates and were eventually buried with them in their graves. A sacred Eleusinian landmark appears in some of these scenes: a rock upon which Demeter sits. This feature is missing from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. But it is essential to both the myth and the cult.

This is the Agelastos Petra, the Mirthless Rock. It appears in some literary versions of the myth as well as on the vases. In order to assess its full significance, we need to know the location of the rock. In addition, in order to understand the relevant scenes on vases, we need to be clear about the iconography of some of the gods who appear in these scenes. We shall consider first the Mirthless Rock and then the iconography of some crucial Eleusinian gods, namely Eubouleus and Iakchos.

The Mirthless Rock, a specifically Eleusinian landmark, is not mentioned in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. A vase at Stanford University clearly shows that Demeter is sitting on a rock (Clinton 1992:14–16 fig. 11; Raubitschek and Raubitschek 1982:115–17). An inscription on the vase confirms that she is Demeter. She is attended by a maiden labeled "Parthenos." In this Eleusinian context, with Triptolemus hovering in his winged chariot, there can hardly be any doubt that Demeter is sitting on the Mirthless Rock. This rock is part of the Eleusinian landscape, and it must be a sacred spot of great antiquity.

The fullest description of the Mirthless Rock appears in a few lines in the *Bibliotheca* of Pseudo-Apollodorus; it occurs in connection with Demeter's arrival at Eleusis: "in the form of a woman she arrived at Eleusis. And first of all she sat on the rock that was named after her Mirthless, near [*para*] the so-called Callichoron Well" (1.5.1). Ovid too mentions the Mirthless Rock as an Athenian landmark (*Fasti* 4.502–4). But the location of the Mirthless Rock at Eleusis has remained a puzzle. Pseudo-Apollodorus tells us only that it was "near" the Callichoron Well. We have a report on Eleusis by Pausanias, who is perhaps overly scrupulous about betraying any of the secrets. In any case, he refuses to say anything about the interior of the sanctuary; he tells us only about monuments outside the sanctuary wall. In describing monuments in front of the sanctuary he mentions the Callichoron Well, another very important sacred spot, but does not mention the Mirthless Rock. It is hard to believe that he would have passed over such an important landmark for the myth if it were *outside* the wall of the sanctuary, "near" the Callichoron Well. Nothing outside the sanctuary in the vicinity of the well resembles a monumental rock. The obvious rock in the vicinity of the well is *within* the sanctuary – the cliff and the nearby cave (Clinton 1992:16, 17 fig. 1 n. 6, fig. 2). And in Greek a cave could be called simply a "rock," *petra*. Theseus supposedly sat on the Mirthless Rock as he was about to descend to Hades (scholiast Aristophanes, *Knights* 785a Koster). The cave below the cliff would suit this story, because it could easily have served as an entrance to the underworld. Dedications found there to underworld deities confirm its underworld character (Clinton 1992:18 n.21). One of the cave's important physical features tends to confirm that the cave was thought of as an entrance to the underworld. A French excavation revealed a narrow inner cave about 5 meters deep, which proved very difficult to penetrate (Clinton 1992:23 fig. 5; Faure 1958). At the far end of this inner cave they found sacrificial remains. This inner cave obviously had religious significance, presumably as a connection to the underworld.

There should be, though, a specific rock, the exact spot where Demeter sat. Near the apparent entrance to the underworld, the opening to the inner cave, there is a spot where an outcropping of rock forms a natural seat. It is striking that on either side of this natural seat and just below it the walls of the cave have been more or less cut away for various purposes, but the seat itself has been left quite untouched (Clinton 1992:23–7 figs 4, 6–7). An interesting feature of this particular rock,

which is hard not to notice, is that when a group of tourists within the cave is listening to their guide, one or two of them will usually be sitting on that outcropping of rock. It is a nearly perfect seat. Given its permanent nature, the Mirthless Rock ought to be a very old landmark within the cult. It is not difficult to understand how it could have served as a focal point around which part of the cult myth took shape, for it is by a gate to Hades, the entrance to the underworld, the very realm which lies at the heart of the cult.

Before turning to the interpretation of entire artistic representations of the myth, we need to consider, as mentioned above, the iconography of some individual gods.

An Eleusinian god whose importance is often neglected in modern discussions of the Mysteria is Eubouleus. It is sometimes thought that he appears in Eleusinian scenes, but identification of him has proved to be difficult. The documentation for the cult, on the other hand, indicates that he is a major god. His name appears in a fifth-century law, the so-called First Fruits Decree, which calls for sacrifices to Demeter and Kore, Triptolemus, the God, the Goddess, and Eubouleus (*IG* i^3 78 lines 38–40). A hellenistic relief at Eleusis actually illustrates Eubouleus. The relief was found near the Mirthless Rock, and inscribed labels on it identify some of the gods depicted. Called the Lakrateides Relief after the priest who dedicated it (ca. 100 BC), it is the largest relief found in the sanctuary and it turns out to be of the greatest importance for understanding the iconography of the gods of the Mysteria (Clinton 1992:51–3 figs 5–7). According to the main inscription on it (*IG* ii^2 4701), Lakrateides was a priest of the God, the Goddess, and Eubouleus. Looking at the relief from left to right (Figure 22.1), with the help of the inscriptions, we see the following figures: a boy at the lower left; behind him, a woman; Demeter; Kore; Plouton; Triptolemus, seated; the Goddess; the God, seated; the priest Lakrateides in low relief, standing in the background; and at the far right a youth with long hair, a torch, and a short tunic (his inscription is missing).

The figures called simply "God" and "Goddess," to whom sacrifice was ordained in the First Fruits Decree (*IG* I^3 78, lines 38–40) are extremely interesting. A special aspect of the cult of the Mysteria is that the God (Theos) and the Goddess (Thea) are really the gods known elsewhere by the names Hades and Persephone. In the Mysteria the names Hades and Persephone are never used, according to our epigraphical documents. The God and the Goddess are equivalent, in a certain sense, to Plouton and Kore (Clinton 1992:114–15; Nilsson 1952a:545, 555–6). Plouton and Kore appear in the Lakrateides Relief on the left, along with Demeter and Triptolemus. But at Eleusis when these two deities were visualized as king and queen of the underworld (i.e. the gods whom Greeks otherwise called Hades and Persephone), they were called simply God and Goddess. Here in the relief the gods represented on the right are apparently underworld gods – Thea (Goddess), Theos (God), and a third missing a label – while the gods on the left are all upper-world gods: young boy, Demeter, Kore, Plouton (his name reflecting his domain, as producing agrarian wealth), and Triptolemus.

In the Lakrateides Relief, since the God and the Goddess (i.e. Hades and Persephone) appear on the right, it would be logical to conclude that the young god on the far right is also connected with the underworld. But there is also another way of corroborating his identity. The main inscription tells us that the dedicator was a priest of the God and the Goddess and Eubouleus, and to all three (and Demeter and Kore)

Figure 22.1 Lakrateides Relief, Eleusis, Archaeological Museum. Photo by C. Mauzy

he made this dedication. It would not make sense if Lakrateides, as priest of the God and Goddess and Eubouleus, included just a representation of the God and the Goddess and excluded Eubouleus, in a relief in which he had himself and his wife represented in the company of nearly all Eleusinian deities. The young god on the far right must therefore be Eubouleus. Thus the Lakrateides relief gives us the iconography of Eubouleus: he is a young male with longish hair (here in flowing locks), wearing a knee-length tunic and carrying a torch.

The small boy at the far left, in high relief ought to be an upper-world deity, as the ears of grain in his hand indicate. He is surely the god Ploutos, the personification of Wealth. Plouton, on the other hand, is not a personification; his name, though later in non-Eleusinian contexts merged with that of Hades for euphemistic purposes, here reflects his original distinct domain and role, god of the rich, fertile earth (Clinton 1992:61–3).

Another difficult Eleusinian god to identify in classical art has been the god called Iakchos (Herodotus 8.65; Clinton 1992: 64–71; Foucart 1914:110–12; Graf 1974: 40–66). He was the god who led the initiates on their march to Eleusis, on the 20th of Boedromion – a journey of 14 miles from the center of Athens to Eleusis along the Sacred Way. As they marched the initiates sang the Iakchos song. In the *Frogs* Aristophanes gives us our fullest description of Iakchos. In the underworld a chorus of dancing initiates call upon him to join them in wearing the initiates' traditional myrtle wreath (325–35). They call him "light-bearing star of the ritual [*teletē*] in the night" (340–2), a description consistent with his carrying a torch. They also call him

"fellow-traveler" (396); he is to escort them to "the goddess," Thea, the name given in the Mysteria to the queen of the underworld, Persephone (397–403), just as in the festival he escorted them to Demeter. They shout: "Iakchos, lover of the dance, join in escorting me!" (403, 408, 413).

In works of art, therefore, we should probably expect Iakchos to be a god with a torch in the company of initiates. The figure that most easily fits this description is the youthful male in the lower field of a fourth-century painted tablet, called the Ninnion Tablet (Figure 22.2), after a woman named Ninnion, who dedicated it within the sanctuary. The male figure carries a torch in either hand, and is followed by two initiates. Both he and the initiates wear the initiates' traditional myrtle wreath. The

Figure 22.2 Ninnion Tablet from Eleusis, Athens, National Museum 11036. After A.N. Skias *Archaeologike Ephemeris* 1901: pl. 1

initiates' sticks and sacks evoke their journey to Eleusis; but now they are clearly at their destination, and Iakchos is leading them toward a seated goddess, surely Demeter. But Iakchos looks very much like the figure we have identified as Eubouleus: he is relatively young, with long locks, a knee-length garment, and high boots; and he carries a torch. This presents a new puzzle: how are we to tell them apart?

The Ninnion Tablet, fortunately, begins to provide the answer. All of the initiates, male and female, in both upper and lower fields, wear a cloak (*himation*); the men have just a cloak, the women a cloak over a *peplos*. The cloak was the traditional garment of the initiates at the Mysteria. Here Iakchos, the god of the initiates' journey, also wears one, on top of his elaborately decorated tunic. This is the attribute that distinguishes Iakchos when he appears with Eubouleus, for in other scenes in which they appear together Eubouleus lacks a *himation*.

On a relief vase (*hydria*) in St. Petersburg, nicknamed the Queen of Vases (Regina Vasorum), two torchbearers stand in symmetrical positions (nos. 2 and 9 in the drawing Figure 22.3) in relation to Demeter and Kore, who appear in the center (nos. 5 and 6). Iakchos can be readily identified as the figure at the left (no. 2) by his cloak (*himation*), which figure no. 9 lacks. So figure no. 9 must be Eubouleus. Heracles (no. 7), appearing here as an initiate, wears a *himation* draped around his waist; he carries both his club and initiate's staff in his right hand, a piglet in his left. Dionysus appears separately (no. 4), also as an initiate, between Triptolemus (no. 3) and Demeter (no. 5).

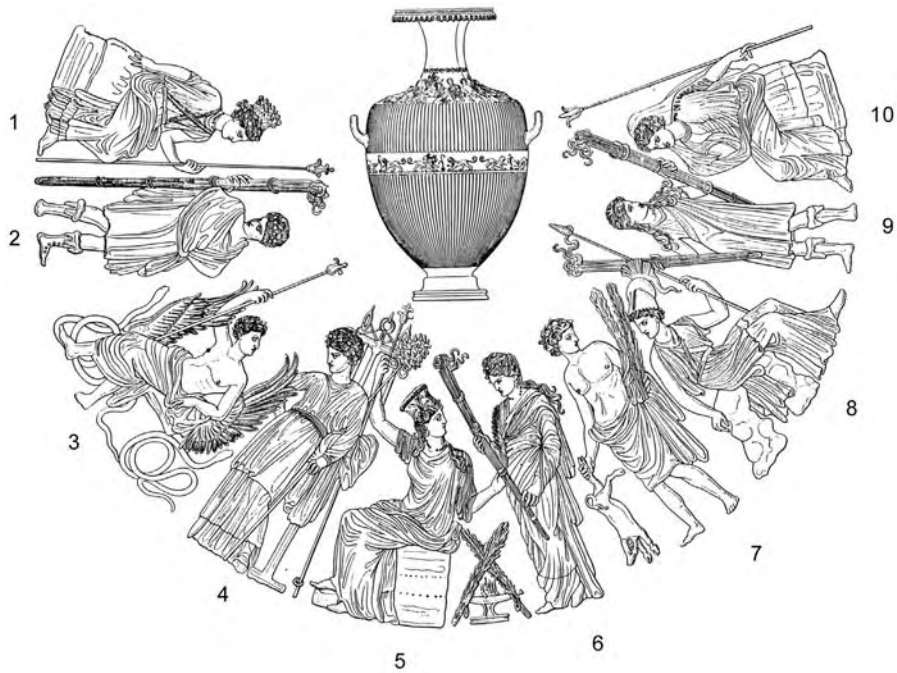

Figure 22.3 Relief *hydria* from Cumae, St. Petersburg, Hermitage 525. Drawing after Baumeister 1885:474, fig. 520

It is striking that Iakchos and Eubouleus have such similar attributes. The important element is the torch (or torches). It is carried by Iakchos to light the way for the initiates; by Eubouleus, as we shall see, also to light the way but not for the initiates.

The Regina Vasorum and other fourth-century images confirm the central importance of Eubouleus in the Eleusinian cult which, as we saw earlier, is reflected in the fifth-century sacrifices listed in the First Fruits Decree, *IG* i^3 78 (Clinton 1992:68, 81–4). It is also possible to identify fifth-century scenes with Eubouleus. For example, on a *stamnos* painted by Polygnotos there are two Eleusinian scenes: the departure of Triptolemus appears on one side; on the other, a male figure, barefoot, in a short tunic, stands between figures who have been identified as Hades and Persephone, i.e. the gods who in Eleusinian terms are called the God and Goddess. He holds torches and looks toward the Goddess. Here and in some similar scenes Eubouleus must be in the underworld (Clinton 1992:71–2 figs 36–42). Inasmuch as Eubouleus is apparently similar to Iakchos in that he seems to be a guide, the most logical conclusion is that in Eleusinian myth it is Eubouleus who guides Kore back from the underworld.

Like other relevant aspects of the myth, the episode of Eubouleus and the Return of Kore does not appear in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. There is, apparently, an echo of it in an *Orphic Hymn*, which related that Demeter went down to Hades in search of her daughter and took with her "Euboulos" (an alternate form of Eubouleus) as a guide (*Hymn* 41.5–8).

Eubouleus carries torches to light the way up from the underworld; Iakchos guides the initiates to Demeter on the Mirthless Rock at Eleusis. Each god is in charge of a transition, towards Demeter at Eleusis: Eubouleus from the lower to the upper world, Iakchos from the world of the uninitiated to the sanctuary, the Mysteria and the promise of "sweeter hopes."

With Iakchos identified we can better understand the Ninnion Tablet. In the lower field Iakchos and the initiates arrive in Eleusis and walk towards Demeter. She does not hold her scepter; it simply rests between her left arm and shoulder. Her daughter Kore is absent, because now, at the beginning of the Mysteria, Kore as Persephone is still in the underworld. Note that Demeter does not sit on a throne but directly on the hillside – the artist is evidently thinking of her as sitting on the Mirthless Rock. Just above Demeter, in the upper field, a very similar goddess sits on a throne, but wears a more elaborate dress. She too has a scepter, but, unlike the goddess below, holds it upright, vigorously, clasped in her left hand. She extends her right hand behind the back of a woman who holds two torches; the woman might be understood as approaching but she could simply be seen as standing next to the seated goddess. This woman with torches ought to be Kore, for Kore usually carries torches in Eleusinian scenes. She is now rejoined with her mother, who extends her right arm in an embrace. The vessel carried by the woman behind Kore is the *plēmochoē*, a ritual vase used on the last day of the festival (Brommer 1980). The overall interpretation of the scenes is then straightforward: the lower plane represents the first day of the Mysteria at Eleusis, the upper plane the last, well after Kore has returned.

The most stunning vase with Eleusinian scenes is the Regina Vasorum, the relief *hydria* now in St. Petersburg, briefly discussed above (Figure 22.3). Gods are arranged symmetrically around Demeter and Kore in the center. The first symmetrical pair, just to the left and right of Demeter and Kore (nos. 5 and 6), are the two most

famous divine initiates, Dionysus (no. 4) and Heracles (no. 7). The next symmetrical pair are Triptolemus (no. 3) and Athena (no. 8). The two of them are naturally linked: Athens, symbolized by Athena, was responsible for the mission of Triptolemus, who provided the gift of grain and announced the Mysteria to the Greek world. Next, left and right, come Iakchos (no. 2) and Eubouleus (no. 9). Iakchos faces a seated, sceptered woman on the left (no. 1), Eubouleus looks at a similar figure on the right (no. 10). These women (nos. 1 and 10) have proved difficult to identify. The representation of Iakchos here is unusual in that he is not leading initiates to the sanctuary. The goddess whom he faces is seated on something that appears roughly carved and round and lump-like; the scholar who originally published the vase, Stephani, called it a "Felsen," a rocky outcrop (Stephani 1869:271 no. 525). The Mirthless Rock is the obvious identification. Thus the goddess sitting on it (no. 1) should be Demeter, and the identification is further strengthened by the *polos* she is wearing; a similar headdress is worn by Demeter in the center (no. 5).

The pair on the left, Demeter and Iakchos (nos. 1 and 2), appear in the context which they share in the cult; it therefore seems reasonable to expect a similar kind of context for the matching pair on the far right (nos. 9 and 10). The seated woman on the far right (no. 10) gives an impression of sorrow: she seems to support her chin with her right hand (not accurately rendered in the drawing); her face seems to express grief; and her left hand dangles down behind her, just touching her scepter (her loose hold on it is similar to that of the figure of the lower Demeter on the Ninnion Tablet). She sits on a throne, if that is what it is, or perhaps a rock. Since, as we have seen, the goddess most closely associated with Eubouleus in the cult myth is Kore after her return from the underworld or the Goddess (i.e. Persephone) before her return, figure no. 10 ought to be the Goddess (Thea), shown in the underworld, grieving because of her separation from her mother. Her queenly status is corroborated by her scepter, and her identification with Kore by the fact that her head is mostly uncovered (a veil, apparently, can be discerned in back), rather like Kore's uncovered head in the central scene (no. 6). Separation of Mother and Daughter (Thea) is expressed here by placement at the extreme edges of the scene, diametrically opposite each other.

The final symmetry of the composition is now clear. As we have seen, the members of each symmetrical pair relate to each other in some significant way: Dionysus and Heracles (nos. 4 and 7) as fellow initiates; Triptolemus and Athena (nos. 3 and 8) as symbols of the generosity of Athens and its invitation to the Mysteria; the torch-bearers Iakchos and Eubouleus (nos. 2 and 9), the one leading initiates to Demeter sitting on her Mirthless Rock, the other leading the Goddess from the underworld to rejoin her mother at Eleusis (no. 5) and to resume her role as the Kore (daughter) (no. 6). We can now recognize a similar relation in the outer pair, grieving mother and sorrowful daughter. There is a further symmetry: the central Demeter (no. 5) is on the same half of the scene as Demeter on the Mirthless Rock (no. 1), and Kore (no. 6) is on the same side as the Goddess (no. 10).

In the center the reunited Mother and Daughter look at each other with feeling. Demeter puts her left arm around Kore's back and lifts her right arm high, vigorously, as she grasps her scepter (unlike her pose on the Mirthless Rock at no. 1). Kore too holds her torch with vigor (in contrast to the way in which she barely clasps her scepter in the underworld at no. 10). The central scene is reminiscent of the upper

register of the Ninnion Tablet, especially in the position of Demeter's hands. We saw that the upper register of the tablet represented the ritual of the *plēmochoai*, held on the final day of the Mysteria. A similar allusion occurs on this vase, in the central scene: on the ground, between Demeter and Kore, stands a *plēmochoē*, below two crossed initiates' staffs. The crossed initiates' staffs appear also in the lower center of the Ninnion Tablet (Figure 22.2), above them the Hieros Lithos (Sacred Stone), indicating here, in the lower register, the opening of the celebration at Eleusis (Clinton 1992:121–5).

The Regina Vasorum highlights the central role played by the myth in the cult.

The Sacred Drama

There are many Eleusinian scenes in art and they present various moments of the myth, but we have concentrated on the Ninnion Tablet and the Regina Vasorum partly because of space but mainly because they give us the progression of the myth from Mirthless Rock to reunion of Mother and Daughter, and, in addition, fairly precise allusions to cult. The scenes not discussed here do not change this picture. The Regina Vasorum presents only gods and goddesses, including divine initiates, but the Ninnion Tablet shows only human initiates, because the tablet is primarily interested in cultic events (opening of the Mysteria at Eleusis with the arrival of the initiates in the lower register; closing of the festival with the *plēmochoai* in the upper register) and only secondarily in the myth (i.e. the status of the goddesses at different moments in the rite). The similarities and differences between the Ninnion Tablet and the Regina Vasorum help us fill out the picture of what mythical events the initiates experience from the moment they enter the sanctuary to the climax of the sacred rite. In these scenes and others we see only the beginning and/or end (Clinton 1992:81–3): as the initiates arrive with Iakchos (in the actual festival he is represented by a statue, carried by the official called *Iakchagōgos*), they approach Demeter on the Mirthless Rock; at the end, i.e. climax, they experience the reunion of the Two Goddesses.

It has long been known that the Mysteria entailed a drama of the wandering of Demeter in search of Kore and, finally, Kore's return (cf., e.g., Burkert 1983:256–64; Foucart 1914:457–85; Mylonas 1961:261–9). These scenes in painting allow us to gain a reasonably good idea of which events the drama encompassed. Clearly, as we have seen, the drama did not begin with the abduction of Kore; its inclusion is not supported by the artistic representations, and the physical features of the Telesterion render it highly unlikely. The abduction itself, therefore, is presupposed; it had occurred before the initiates reached Eleusis; it was a given. The drama began with Mother and Daughter separated and in sorrow: Demeter on the Mirthless Rock, the Goddess (Thea) in the underworld.

The initial image of sorrow and pain was impressed upon the initiates as they proceeded, blindfolded, past the Mirthless Rock. At this point they probably heard lamentations of Demeter and Kore, mentioned by Proclus (*Commentary on the Republic* 1.125.3–22 Kroll). This impression of the goddesses' pain they took with them as they made their way up the path to the Telesterion. Here they apparently wandered about outside the Telesterion (perhaps also inside) in search of Kore,

confused and fearful as they stumbled in the dark, their eyes still blinded, each initiate guided by his mystagogue. All the while the hierophant kept sounding a gong, summoning Kore (Apollodorus, *On the Gods*, *FGrH* 244, fr. 110b). They participated in the suffering of the goddesses, a suffering that intensified as they wandered in darkness. Finally the scene is transformed from darkness to brilliant light (*mega phōs*), as the Telesterion is opened (Clinton 2004).

The experience that the initiates underwent up to this point is akin to death. It is described for us, in general terms, in a fragment of Plutarch's *On the Soul*:

> Then [at the point of death] it [i.e., the soul] suffers something like what those who participate in the great initiations [*teletai*] suffer. Hence even the word "dying" [*teleutan*] is like the word "to be initiated" [*teleisthai*], and the act (of dying) is like the act (of being initiated). First of all there are wanderings and wearisome rushings about and certain journeys unending [*atelestoi*] through the darkness with suspicion, then before the very end [*telos*] all the terrors – fright and trembling and sweating and amazement. But then one encounters an extraordinary light, and pure regions and meadows offer welcome, with voices and dances and majesties of sacred sounds and holy sights; in which now the completely initiated one [*pantelēs . . . memuēmenos*], becoming free and set loose, enjoys the rite, crowned, and consorts with holy and pure men . . . (Plutarch fr. 178 Bernadakis)

It is no doubt shortly after this, i.e. when they enter the region of pure light, the Telesterion, that they catch a glimpse of Demeter and Kore reunited. All this is seen and experienced, certainly not narrated; for again and again the words we hear from ancient writers about the Mysteria emphasize the *seeing*; and Aristotle tells us that in the Mysteria one does not learn anything, one *experiences*.

But how did Kore make her return? Where in the sanctuary did she ascend from the underworld? A scene on a recently published vase, a red-figure *hydria* in Bern (Abbeg-Stiftung 3.127.73), suggests that she first greeted Demeter while the goddess was sitting on the Mirthless Rock (Clinton 1992:87–8 figs 22–3). In physical terms, it would make sense if Kore arose from somewhere in the vicinity of the rock, greeted her mother, and the two of them went up to the Telesterion together with Eubouleus.

On the north side of the cave precinct in which the Mirthless Rock is located, there is a deep pit, marked "Cisterne" on the plan (Clinton 1992:5 fig. 7); at regular intervals along its sides there are cavities cut for the insertion of beams, which presumably allowed one to climb up or down. Its location seems unlikely for a cistern. Right next to it is a set of steps cut in the cliff which lead up from it to an elliptical opening, partly natural, perhaps partly artificial, in the wall of the cave. Mylonas pointed out:

> It seems apparent that no water was ever found in that pit . . . There can be little doubt that a specific use was made of the opening, of the stairway, and perhaps even of the pit; possibly all these elements served a single purpose. The obvious explanation is that they served for the portrayal of the fortunes of Persephone . . . Perhaps they were used in the staging of the passage from the lower world, in providing Persephone's ascent to Eleusis. (Mylonas 1961:148)

His suggestion is quite attractive. It seems reasonable to assume that Kore emerged from the underworld here, led by Eubouleus; then they climbed the steps that led to the hole in the wall of the cave, and walked across the cave to her mother who was sitting, sorrowfully, on the Mirthless Rock (Clinton 1992:87–9 figs 10–12). There they embraced.

The Two Goddesses (represented probably by the two priestesses called Hierophantides) and Eubouleus (represented by a priest) then walked up to the Telesterion. I suspect that their passage from Mirthless Rock to Telesterion was not seen by the Mystai (first-time initiands), who were still veiled, but by the *Epoptai* (initiated at least one year earlier), some of them lining the path up to the Telesterion, the rest inside the Telesterion.

After the Mystai perform the search for Kore, they mill about the Telesterion, anxiously waiting in the darkness. Suddenly the doors of the Telesterion are flung open, and a blazing light pours forth. The initiates, as they enter the Telesterion, now presumably without their blindfolds, pass from the outer darkness into an immense interior space lit with extraordinary light, which probably came from hundreds of torches held by the Epoptai, standing on the rows of stone steps lining the interior walls (Clinton 2004).

Within the Telesterion the goddesses were visible to the Mystai, but were now displayed, probably as illuminated images, on a structure in the center which may have served as a platform (often mistakenly called an Anaktoron) (Clinton 1992:89–90, 126–32; 2004). The basic scene is presented often enough in painting.

After the Mystai left, a special vision was revealed to the *Epoptai*. A Christian writer speaks of a display of grain and of a child to whom Demeter gave birth (Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies* 5.8.40 Marcovich). The child evidently appeared suddenly and dramatically. This child ought to be Ploutos (Clinton 1992:91–4). In art he frequently appears as an older boy, usually naked, holding a cornucopia and wearing a wreath of grain. As he made his epiphany, presumably from within the structure at the center of the Telesterion, it was perhaps at this moment that the Hierophant displayed the ear of grain mentioned by the Church Father Hippolytus.

The Mysteria revealed simple things, like the return of a lost daughter to her mother, a goddess in suffering (an extraordinary state for a Greek god or goddess), joy that accompanies the appearance of grain, the grain that is Ploutos, the agrarian prosperity that sustains family and clan – all simple things that at the same time had profound significance. The impact lay in part in the dramatic presentation, which was an essential aspect of the experience. The initiates experienced the suffering of Demeter and Kore and, at the end, the goddesses' joy; their relation to the Two Goddesses changed forever; they enjoyed a new status, and that filled them with confidence for the time when they would seek Kore again in a much more perilous transition, as the Thea, queen in the underworld, who held the power to grant them a joyous existence for all time (*tou sumpantos aiōnos*, in the words of Isocrates). Unfortunately, we cannot recapture their experience, their suffering and their joy. One can feel it, though, pervading ancient allusions to the Mysteria, as in Plato's *Symposium* in the words of the prophetess Diotima (209E–212A) or in such descriptions of the Mysteria as this one by Cicero:

> It seems to me that [your] Athens has produced many extraordinary and divine things but nothing better than those Mysteria, by which we have been led out of a rude and boorish existence into humanity [*humanitas*] and have become civilized, and as they are called initiations [*initia*], so truly have we learned [in them] the origins [*principia*] of life; and not only have we received a way of living with prosperity [*laetitia*] but also a way of dying with greater hope. (*On Laws* 2.36)

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

This chapter follows closely a main argument in Clinton 1992, which treats many additional problems concerning the cult, its myth, and its iconography (the latter updated now by Clinton and Palagia 2003).

The fullest account of the cult of the Mysteria remains Foucart 1914, and this is still useful, though his theory of an Egyptian origin has not found general favor. Nilsson 1967 has a good discussion, with references to research up to that time. Burkert 1983 presents an important survey of the evidence and discussion of many problems, with a theory that a central secret ritual consisted in sacrifice (on sacrifice at the Mysteria see also Clinton 1988). An illuminating comparative phenomenology of ancient mystery cults, including the Eleusinian, is given in Burkert 1987a.

The archaeological remains received detailed treatment by Noack 1927. An account of the important excavations of the 1930s is given in Mylonas 1961. Travlos 1988:91–169 contains a good bibliography of the excavations and many photographs and plans of the sanctuary. Unfortunately no full treatment of the remains on the scale of Noack 1927 has appeared.

On the priests of the cult see Clinton 1974; on the relation of the Mysteria to Orphic texts, Graf 1974; on the Mysteria as the premier panhellenic festival of Athens, Clinton 1994. The complete edition of the inscriptions of the sanctuary at Eleusis (Clinton 2006) contains documentation and detailed treatment of some of the topics discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Magic in Classical and Hellenistic Greece

Matthew W. Dickie

Introduction

It is very much to be doubted whether many of the readers of this *Companion to Greek Religion* will be surprised to find magic amongst the subjects treated and will feel that its inclusion calls for justification. Why this should be so is not hard to explain: in the minds of most people the notion of magic is bound up with that of religion. There is a feeling that there is an opposition between true religion and magic; magic is after all supposed to be the province of the opponent of God, the Devil. There may even be an awareness that in early modern Europe the confessions extracted from those accused of witchcraft often enough spoke of a Witches' Sabbath in which the rituals of Christian worship were turned upside down. It does not follow that, because we intuitively connect religion and magic, an essay on magic has any place in a set of essays on Greek religion. We cannot just take it for granted that the Greek understanding of religion and of magic coincides with our own.

Religion is a more problematic notion than magic. It is notoriously difficult to give an adequate rendering of the English word "religion" in either Greek or Latin; there is no single word in either ancient language that fits the bill. That is not to say that it is impossible to put into Greek or Latin whatever is meant by the use of the English word "religion" in any given context. That it is always possible to render what is meant by "religion" in Greek or Latin gives the lie to those who assert that the Greeks and the Romans had no concept of religion. A more accurate, though less dramatic, statement of the true state of affairs would be that the Greeks and the Romans have no one word that covers everything comprehended in the English word "religion".

For what it is worth, it is possible to render the English word "magic" more or less adequately with a single Greek term, *mageia* or *goēteia*. There is a very simple reason: it is that speakers of English are heir to the Greek concept of magic. The same could be said of those who use a romance language. It is possible to trace the history of the

notion back to the Romans and from them to the Greeks. The oppositions that define magic for us are already present in the Greek notion, although not exactly in the same form. There is the opposition between magic and proper religious practice; there is the opposition between rational scientific inquiry and magic; there is an opposition between magic and what is legal; and finally there is an opposition between magic and morality. Magic for the Greeks, as for us, is something that is inherently secret; it is esoteric knowledge to which only a few adepts have access.

Although there is no great difficulty in tracing the notion of magic with which we operate back to the Romans and from them to the Greeks, it is a much trickier business to reconstruct the emergence of the concept of magic in the Greek world of the fifth century BC. Many of the pieces in the story are missing. But what is tolerably certain is that those who practiced what came to be called magic were persons on the margins of society, suspected of performing actions likely to incur the ire of the gods. One of the words that the Greeks used to refer to a magician is *magos* (pl. *magoi*), a term originally used to denominate members of a caste of Iranian fire-priests. It has been suggested that members of the caste made their way to the Greek cities of Asia Minor in the second half of the sixth century BC and from there to the rest of the Greek world. The suspicion with which the rituals performed by *magoi* were met may have led to the word's acquiring a derogatory connotation. Part of the derogatory connotation comes from the feeling that the rituals performed by *magoi* subvert proper religious practice and are for that reason impious and so likely to draw down the wrath of the gods on those who have anything to do with them. The opposition between magic and religion that is an inherent part of the modern concept of magic has its roots in part in the distrust that itinerant *magoi* encountered as they made their way from city to city in Asia Minor and in Greece proper.

The rituals that the *magoi* who wandered throughout the Greek world carried out seem very often to have mimicked mystery cult. Why this should be so is a puzzle, since the rituals of mystery cult have nothing to with the fire sacrifices that *magoi* performed in honor of Ahura-Madza, the supreme deity in the Iranian pantheon. At the heart of mystery cult is the idea of a secret revealed only to a select few that effects a transformation in those who have witnessed and heard it and at the same time holds out the promise of better times in this life and of a blissfully happy afterlife. The notion that magic is by its nature secret and is privy to hidden and powerful forms of knowledge has its origins in *magoi* appropriating the rituals of mystery cult for their own purposes.

A medical treatise, written in the late fifth or early fourth century BC, that seeks to demonstrate that the so-called sacred disease, which is to say epilepsy, is no more sacred than any other disease, illustrates two of the reasons why those who practiced magic were thought to be guilty of impiety (*dussebeia*) and of not according the gods the respect that was their due. It was that persons who boasted of being able to cure the so-called sacred disease by magical means in effect, despite their pretended concern for piety, either denied the existence of the gods or imagined they were more powerful than the gods, since if they could really achieve what they boasted of being able to do, they either had powers superior to those of the gods or denied their existence altogether; they were furthermore impious in the sense that they were prepared to stop at nothing, since the gods inspired no fear in them (Hippocrates, *On the Sacred Disease* 1.24–31). The writer makes his point by adducing some other

feats that the magicians who pretend to cure epilepsy maintain they are able to perform: pulling down the moon, making the sun disappear, causing calm or storm, creating rain or drought, and making the sea passable or impassable:

> Those practicing such feats are to my mind guilty of impiety [*dussebein*] and of supposing either that the divine does not exist or does not have power and it seems to me that they would not be kept from performing the most desperate of deeds, since the gods cause them no fear. (Hippocrates, *On the Sacred Disease* 1.30)

In short, magicians are guilty of impiety on two scores: in the first place because they presume to subvert what in the eyes of the author of the tract is properly the province of the gods and secondly because they will stop at nothing, since they are not at all afraid of the gods.

The author of the tract *On the Sacred Disease* is hardly alone in thinking magic-working impious and wicked and that those who practice it will stop at nothing. It was a view of magic to which an Athenian audience to tragedy might be expected to respond sympathetically. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why Deianeira, the wife of Hercules, after anointing a garment, to be given to her errant husband, with an unguent that she imagines will keep him from desiring any other woman, declares that she wishes to know nothing of evil deeds of temerity and that she abominates women who have recourse to such acts of temerity, but that measures have been taken to vanquish her rival by using a love-philter (Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 582–6). Deianeira, in other words, asserts that she shares in the general abomination of women who use love-philters, since such women will stop at nothing.

In early modern Europe, those who confessed to having practiced witchcraft may have asserted that they had sworn fealty to the Devil. It is to be suspected that they were prompted to make such a confession or felt that that was what they were expected to do. In classical antiquity, not even those who condemned magic-working accused those engaging in it of being a race apart, owing loyalty to gods who were enemies of the gods everybody else worshiped. Those in classical antiquity who practiced magic, did not, for their part, turn normal religious practices on their head; their prayers, for instance, are not very different from the prayers of the worshipers in respectable public cults. There is a good deal of evidence, most of it, admittedly for a period later than the remit of the present essay, that magic-workers made a great pretense of their piety. The author of the treatise *On the Sacred Disease* does say that those practicing magic talk a great deal about the divine and deity, but that in reality there is no piety in what they say; their piety (*to eusebes*) and their divine (*to theion*) are impious (*asebes*) and unholy (*anosion*) (1.27–8).

While ancient magic-workers do not belong to a Satanic cult, it is the case that the deities they invoke do tend, although not exclusively, to be connected with the nether regions. In representations in literature of magic-working, it is Hecate, a deity with strong connections to the Underworld, who is the goddess of choice for women magicians. In the hellenistic epic poem by Apollonius of Rhodes that tells the tale of voyage made by Jason from Thessaly to Colchis on the southeastern coast of the Black Sea, the Colchian princess, Medea, owes her expertise in magic to Hecate and as her priestess tends her shrine on a daily basis (*Argonautica* 3.251–2, 477–8). Whether literature is in this matter an accurate reflection of reality is impossible to say.

By the latter part of the fifth century, accordingly, to refer to someone as a magician carried the implication that the person in question engaged in a secretive fashion in audacious acts of wickedness that were impious and displeasing to the gods and that subverted the normal course of nature. Such persons might be referred to as *magoi* or *goētes*, a word cognate with the Greek word for a cry of lamentation, or *pharmakoi*, which meant someone expert in drugs or spells, or as *epaoidoi*, meaning persons skilled in incantations, *epaoidai*. All of these terms tend to be used in a derogatory fashion and are used metaphorically to decry someone as a fraud and trickster.

The emergence of the notion of magic seems to have led to the reclassification of a whole range of activities that had long been practiced. How they were understood in an earlier era is something of a mystery. In Homer's *Odyssey*, for instance, the goddess Circe entertains some members of Odysseus' crew with food and drink in which she has mixed baneful drugs (*pharmaka*) that cause them to forget their fatherland; she then strikes them with a rod and herds them into a pig-pen, where they assume the form of pigs, though their minds remain unimpaired (10.233–40). By the early fourth century, Circe's actions are seen as those of a sorceress. What earlier times made of them is a puzzle.

The Greeks and the Romans never entirely lost the belief that Persia was the true home of magic and that its founder was the Persian sage Zoroaster. The Roman writer the Elder Pliny, who subscribed to the view that Zoroaster was the inventor of magic, maintains that magic still dominates Persia (*Natural Histories* 30.2–3). In the hellenistic period there was a great deal of pseudepigraphical writing of magical recipes; they were attributed to Persian sages. They clearly contributed to the conviction that true expertise in magic was to be sought in Persia. At some point, perhaps in the second century BC, claims began to be advanced for Egyptian expertise in magic. During the Roman empire it is principally to Egypt that would-be magicians were supposed to have traveled to be instructed in the secrets of the magical craft by Egyptian priests.

Not everybody was persuaded that magicians could accomplish what they boasted of being able to do. The author of the tract *On the Sacred Disease* takes the view that the magicians, purifiers, beggar priests, and charlatans who treat epilepsy as a divinely sent condition do so to ensure that their own ignorance will not be exposed and that, if they are successful, they will be credited with the success, and, if unsuccessful, that the gods will receive the blame (1.10–11). It is possible to take such a position without subscribing to the view that all magic is a fraud. The skepticism of our author, it turns out, is not confined to calling into question the ability of magicians to cure epilepsy, but is wider-ranging: he suggests that the feats magicians boast of being able to perform such as pulling the moon down, making the sun disappear, and causing storm or calm are not real, but have been invented to provide them with a source of livelihood (1.31–2). Even such an expression of disbelief does not quite give us warrant to assert that the author did not believe in the efficacy of any form of magic.

Plato, to judge from the stance taken by the principal interlocutor in the *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger, in the preamble to the proposals he makes for legislation affecting *pharmakeia*, a term that covers both using physical substances to poison and engaging in magical practices, did not believe that men had anything to fear from most of the persons who engaged in magic against them, although it would be virtually

impossible to persuade them to ignore in their suspicion of each other the images fashioned out of wax that they saw at their doors, at crossroads, and on the tombs of their ancestors (932e1–933c2). The Athenian Stranger falls a good deal short of declaring outright that all magic is a fraud. He does say that arriving at an understanding of the nature of such matters is far from easy and, further, that it is not easy, if one knows oneself, to persuade others of the truth (933a5–7). The Athenian Stranger may be inclined to discount the effectiveness of the magical machinations (*manganeia*), incantations (*epaoidai*), and bindings (*katadeseis*) of most men on the grounds that they have no idea what they are doing (933c4–5), but he takes quite another view of the magic performed by seers (*manteis*) and interpreters of prodigies (*teratoskopoi*): the penalty that he imposes on such persons, if they engage in magic, is the same as that which he lays down for doctors who practice poisoning: death (933c4–e2); the penalty for persons who are not doctors or seers is to be left to the discretion of the court (933d5–e5). Plato in the *Laws* does not explain in what sense seers may be said to have an understanding of magical practices. For enlightenment it is necessary to turn to another dialogue, the *Symposium*, where there is a disquisition, put into the mouth of the prophetess Diotima, on the mediating role played by demons between gods and men (202e1–203a2): seers (*manteis*) and priests use demons as their agents in their communications with the gods in the matter of sacrifices, rites of initiation, incantations (*epaoidai*), and all manner of magic-working (*manganeia*) and sorcery (*goēteia*). The conclusion to be drawn is that Plato believed in the efficacy of magical rituals and that he attributed the powers such rituals had to demons.

Plato's successors continued to believe in the reality of magic to the end of antiquity and beyond. The followers of Epicurus, on the other hand, thought magic a complete and utter fraud; some of them even went out of their way to expose the tricks in which magicians engaged. Whether the founder of the school, who lived at the end of the fourth century BC, was of the same persuasion the evidence does not allow us to decide. It is very difficult to assess the degree to which magic had a hold on the minds of men in the classical and hellenistic Greek worlds. The testimony of Plato's Athenian Stranger would suggest that most men were afraid of magic. On balance, it would probably be wise to believe him.

What Did Ancient Magicians Do?

The impression left by much modern work on Greek and Roman magic is that magic-working in classical antiquity consisted principally in the casting of spells intended to affect the behavior or the fortunes of the person at whom the spell was directed. We are told about spells designed to win the sexual favors of both men and women as well as spells aimed at impeding the sexual pleasure of rivals; we can read about spells meant to harm enemies, spells that left the other party to a law-suit speechless, and spells whose purpose it was to influence the result of chariot races. But we do not hear much about what springs to the minds of most people, when they hear the word "magic" mentioned, which is conjuring tricks and illusions; in other words, the stock-in-trade of the modern stage magician. Yet the creation of illusions and wonders is as much a part of Greek and Roman magic as is the casting of spells intended to

alter the behavior or fortunes of oneself or others. The reason why so much attention has been devoted to spells cast against others is that just such spells survive from classical antiquity. They do so since they are written on lead or papyrus or on fragments of pottery and deposited in graves and wells or in the sanctuaries of certain deities such as Demeter, a goddess with connections to the underworld; they were also placed in locations frequented by their intended victims, so they may be hidden in a house or buried on a race-course.

The spells that have survived from the Greek world of the classical and hellenistic periods are all written on thin plates of lead that have been folded and rolled up and then pierced by a nail before being deposited with a body, which had probably been buried fairly recently, or placed in the sanctuary of a deity. They are generally known as curse tablets, although there are those who would prefer to call them binding spells. (''Binding spell'' is not an entirely satisfactory way of referring to the lead plates, since the term is too general. Verbs meaning ''to bind'' are used to characterize any sort of spell placed on another person, whether written on something or not.) The Latin term *defixio* is also used. The spell, if it is not just a list of names, as early ones tend to be, is invariably in the first person singular and declares that the person at whom it is directed is to be bound down or given over into the possession of the deities or spirits of the dead. Sometimes the victim is consigned to the power of the dead person in whose grave the lead tablet is placed. Although the spell is written in the first person, the identity of the speaker is almost invariably concealed, no doubt because the persons casting the spell thought it dangerous to reveal their identity.

It should always be kept in mind that there may have been more to putting a spell on an enemy or on a person whose sexual favors were desired than depositing a rolled-up lead tablet with a freshly buried body or secreting it in a sanctuary of Demeter. Rituals may also have been performed. Nor should it be assumed that depositing a lead tablet was a necessary element in putting a curse on someone. A poem by Theocritus, who was active in Alexandria in the first quarter of the third century BC, portrays a young woman, a courtesan trying through magical rituals to win back the affections of a lover (*Idyll* 2); lead tablets play no part in the binding spell she places on her erstwhile lover.

There is a quasi-sociological thesis that seeks to explain why some Greeks had recourse to the use of curse tablets that should be mentioned, since it has won a fair measure of acceptance. The thesis has it that such magic-working is not particularly sinister but is rather a reflection of the competitiveness or agonistic spirit that characterizes classical Greek cities (Faraone 1991a:20). Because few curse tablets that explicitly speak of killing the person cursed have survived, the conclusion drawn is that the persons who cast them played by the rules governing the give and take of competition in the Greek city-state. In fact, there are several spells that are meant to kill their victim. Maggidis (2000:98) collects instances of curse tablets that seem to call for the death of the victim, only to dismiss them. To his list should be added a curse tablet of the first half of the fourth century BC from Pella in Macedonia (*SEG* 43.434), in which a woman seeks to prevent the union of the man who is the object of her desires and a rival; she prays that the rival may perish wretchedly. For further discussion of the tablet, see Voutiras 1998. It is true that one of the striking features of life in certain Greek cities were the competitions in music, drama, and athletics that the city or a religious sanctuary connected with it organized. It does not

follow that because there were organized competitions in certain fields, Greek society was any more or less competitive than other societies nor, more importantly, that the rules governing competition in athletics or music carried over into other walks of life. To extend the notion of an agonistic spirit to all walks of Greek life is to make it meaningless and to deprive it of explanatory force. A victory in the games won over opponents who have all been disabled by foul play is ultimately meaningless, whereas a courtesan or bronze-smith who eliminates a rival is the more likely to prosper. There are many possible explanations, besides the feeling that consigning a rival to death was not quite cricket, for the supposed unwillingness on the part of those who employed curse tablets to seek the death of their opponents.

If we return to the tract *On the Sacred Disease*, we encounter there a form of magic-working, which may be designated meteorological magic. It encompasses bringing the moon down, making the sun disappear, causing calm and storm, rain and drought, making the sea unvoyageable, rendering land infertile, and other such feats (1.29–30).Virtually nothing further is heard about meteorological magic in our period apart from a joke in Aristophanes about purchasing a Thessalian woman to bring the moon down (*Clouds* 749–50) and a tantalizing reference in a poem composed by a mid-fifth-century Sicilian, Empedocles of Acragas, who is customarily treated as a philosopher, but who is as much a holy man as he is a philosopher (Kingsley 1995 does justice to Empedocles as holy man). In the poem, Empedocles promises an unknown addressee that he alone will be taught remedies against old age and sickness, he will learn how to check the power of the winds and make them blow again, he will learn to cause drought and bring a man back to life (D-K 31 B 111). The lines ultimately come from the hellenistic biographer Satyrus, who seems to have cited them in recounting a story about Empedocles' having performed sorcery (*goēteuōn*) in the presence of one of the pioneers in the study of rhetoric, Gorgias (Diogenes Laertius 8.59). How Empedocles understood his promise is a complicated question, but what is not in doubt is the construction Satyrus, writing in the late third or early second century BC, put on the promise: Empedocles was boasting of his knowledge of sorcery (on Satyrus, see Gudeman 1923:228–35). It follows that in the second century BC the control of wind and rain as well as protection against old age and death and the bringing of the dead back to life were what a sorcerer might be expected to promise.

In later times one of the fields in which magicians are known to have professed expertise was the healing and prevention of sickness. It was here that the public in all likelihood came most frequently into contact with magic. So much was magical healing taken for granted that in AD 318 Constantine, shortly after he had officially espoused Christianity, in issuing an edict against those who used the arts of magic either against the well-being of others or to kindle sexual desire in the chaste, explicitly excepts from punishment those who use devices to protect their own health and to protect their crops from the effects of weather (*Theodosian Code* 9.16.3). We hear comparatively little in our period about magical healing, but it is to be presumed that it was an important aspect of magic. From the fifth century BC on, magicians appropriated as their special preserve incantations (*epaoidai*), so much so that one of the names given them was *epaoidoi*, or enchanters. Now incantations had long been used in healing sickness and wounds. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus' maternal uncles perform an incantation over a wound inflicted by a wild boar to stanch the flow of

blood (19.455–8). That form of healing became the province of the magician. The author of the tract *On the Sacred Disease* speaks of persons whom he calls magicians (*magoi*), purifiers, begging priests and quacks employing incantations (*epaoidai*) and purificatory rituals to cure epilepsy (1.10–12). These are not necessarily separate categories of person, but may well be the same persons referred to under different descriptions. A joke in a forensic speech from the second part of the fourth century BC suggests that healing epileptics was part of the repertoire of some magicians in Athens at that time: the accused is said to have inherited the drugs and incantations of a well-known sorceress, to have practiced magic and quackery, and to have boasted of being able to cure those subject to epileptic seizures, even though he was himself seized by villainy ([Demosthenes] 25.79).

There is another form of medicine that magicians increasingly took over, the cutting of roots, *rhizotomia*. In the *Iliad*, Patroclus applies the knowledge of soothing drugs in which Achilles has instructed him and which Achilles in his turn has learned from the Centaur Chiron: he scatters a bitter root that he has broken up by rubbing it in his hands over a wound; it checks the pain and dries up the flow of blood (11.828–48); in the *Odyssey*, the god Hermes comes to Odysseus' aid and pulls out a root from the earth that mortals may only extract with difficulty; it will afford Odysseus protection against Circe (10.301–6). When the sorceress Medea in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* cuts a root with which she will anoint Jason to render him invulnerable to the blows of weapons and to being burned by fire, she employs magical rituals to harvest it: she gathers it in a shell from the Caspian Sea, washes it seven times in ever-flowing water, and at dead of night, wearing dark garments, invokes Brimo seven times before cutting the root (3.844–66).

Later in classical antiquity, we hear a good deal about the use of magic to find out what lies hidden from human view, whether it be in the present, past, or future. That this was an important aspect of magic in the classical and hellenistic Greek world is more than likely. Indirect testimony to close ties between magic-working and divination is to be found in Plato's conviction that seers were the only true experts in magic (*Laws* 933d7–e5). It should be acknowledged that Plato has nothing to say about seers employing magic in their divinatory endeavors. The universal historian Diodorus Siculus tells a story about the leader of the slave revolt in Sicily in the 130s BC, a man from Apamea in Syria called Eunus, that illustrates one of the ways in which magic-working and prophetic utterance could become intertwined (the source of the story is a contemporary of Eunus from Apamea, the Stoic philosopher, Posidonius). Eunus is introduced to us as a magician (*magos*) and wonder-worker (*teratourgos*) who professed to be able to predict future events, because of what a god had told him in dream; he went on from dream-prophecy to seeing gods when he was in a waking state and to hearing what they had to say about the future; his final trick was to utter prophecies in an inspired state while breathing fire; he accomplished the feat by putting into his mouth a walnut, containing glowing embers, that had been pierced at both ends; he then blew through the holes to cause flames to issue from his mouth (34/35.2.5–7).

A form of divination with strong associations with magic that was practiced in the period under review was necromancy. That is not to say there were not perfectly respectable oracular sites connected with the underworld (*nekuomanteia*) where the dead were consulted. In a remarkable passage, the geographical writer of the early first

century AD, Strabo, drawing on the philosopher Posidonius, compares the esteem Moses enjoyed as a prophet amongst the Jews with that of Amphiaraus, Trophonius, Orpheus, and Musaeus amongst the Greeks, of the *magoi*, the necromancers or *nekuomanteis*, the diviners from bowls or *lekanomanteis*, and the diviners in water or *hudromanteis* amongst the Persians, and of the Chaldaeans or astrologers amongst the Assyrians (16.2.39). That image of the Persians probably owes more to Greek ideas about the magic practiced in Persia than it does to any Persian reality; what it really tells us about are forms of magic practiced in the Greek-speaking hellenistic world. (In his description of a visit to the underworld, the satirical writer of the second half of the second century AD, Lucian, gives the man who conducts the visit the Persian name of Mithrobarzanes, although identifying him as a Chaldaean, and has him don magic garb that resembles the clothing worn by the Medes: *Menippus* 6–8.) Plato in the *Laws* takes it for granted that persons who are necromancers will at the same time profess to be able to bend the gods to their will by sacrifices, prayers, and the incantations of sorcery (909a8–b5); that is to say, necromancy is practiced by sorcerers. For such persons he reserves a particularly severe punishment, isolating them from the rest of the citizens in a prison for the rest of their lives and casting their bones beyond the boundaries of the state (909c1–6).

There is evidence that in the hellenistic period another of the forms of divination with which Strabo credits the Persians was practiced in the Greek-speaking world as a form of magic What happened in this form of magical divination was that a boy-medium gazed into a mirror, pool of water, or lamp, where he saw a vision that led him to utter a prophetic utterance. The boy was prepared for his vision by the magician who intoned an incantation over him. Apuleius of Madaura, who stood trial for magic-working at Sabrata in North Africa between AD 156 and 158 and was himself accused of having uttered incantations over a boy who was gazing into a lamp, cites a story told by Varro, a Roman polymath of the Late Republic, about a magical consultation; its subject was the outcome of the Mithridatic War and it had taken place in Tralles, a city in the Maeander valley; a boy had gazed at an image of Hermes in a pool of water and then uttered a prediction in verse of some one hundred and sixty lines (*Apology* 43.3–6).

We have already had occasion to look at the passage in Plato's *Symposium* in which the prophetess Diotima posits a category of being that lies half-way between gods and men, and the members of which act as intermediaries between the human and the divine (202e1–203a2). The doctrine Diotima enunciates assumed a huge importance in later Platonism, which takes it for granted, almost certainly correctly, that Diotima is Plato's mouthpiece. In the view of one Platonist, Apuleius of Madaura, what the doctrine meant for magic was that demons were the agents who created the wonders performed by magicians (*On the God of Socrates* 6). Apuleius' application of the theory to explain the wonder-working side of magic is an indication of how large that aspect of magic loomed in the minds of men. It is conspicuous that references to magicians in Plato are predominantly to persons engaged in the wonder-working, illusion-creating side of magic. Magicians or *goētes* are for Plato above all persons who create illusions; they are persons who practice wonder-working (*thaumatopoiia*); persons who can change their own appearance or the appearance of objects (*goētes* as creators of illusions: *Republic* 584a8–9, 602c10–d4; *goētes* able to change their form: *Euthydemus* 288b8, *Republic* 380d1–383a5; *goētes* and *thaumatopoiia*: *Sophist*

234e7–235b6). Since Plato is interested in the relationship between appearance and reality, it is natural that he should appeal to the illusion-creating side of magic to illustrate the difference between appearance and reality. It would be wrong to conclude that the illusion-creating side of magic was more important than the spell-casting. What Plato's references to magic-working do show is that a good deal of magic consisted in public performance. Magicians were not necessarily obscure figures, consulted only in back alleys; they might well be flamboyant theatrical personalities, eager to perform in front of an audience. Not all wonder-workers or *thaumatopoioi* would have been classified as magicians or *goētes*. *Thaumatopoiia* or *thaumatourgia* encompasses a wide range of activities, from the acts of the acrobat and juggler to the performance of conjuring tricks. It is the persons who create illusions, whether by mechanical means or by sleight of hand, who are the more likely to be called *goētes*. The settings in which wonder-workers and magicians performed will have ranged from drinking parties or symposia, to public crossroads, market-places, and even the theater. Eunus, the instigator of the First Sicilian Slave War, who is described as a magician (*magos*) and wonder-worker (*teratourgos*), is said to have been brought by his master, who was quite taken in by his performances, to symposia, where he prophesied in response to questions put to him by those present (Diodorus Siculus 34/35.2.8). We hear of crowds of foolish persons forming a circle around wonder-workers (Isocrates, *Antidosis* 2).

The evidence for the classical and hellenistic periods throws very little light on what kind of tricks magicians-cum-wonder-workers performed and what apparatuses they employed. There is one tantalizing reference in Plato's *Republic* in which Socrates, to illustrate the limited contact men have with reality, suggests their situation is like that of persons confined in a cave who can only see the shadows cast by light from a fire on figures borne along above a wall that lies behind the prisoners; that wall, Socrates suggests, is similar to the barrier or parapet that lies in front of the spectators above which wonder-workers show their wonders (514a1–b6). Magicians of a rather later date are known to have used just such tricks to throw the shadowy figures of gods and demons on ceilings (Hippolytus, *Refutations of All Heresies* 4.35.1–2).

An encyclopedic writer of the early Roman empire tells of performers who put their fingers into the mouths of poisonous snakes that had been drugged (Celsus, *On Medicine* 5.27.3c). There is some evidence that the practice of handling snakes goes back to the hellenistic period and was one of the tricks magicians performed. The hellenized Jew who goes under the name of Artapanus and who cannot have been active much later than 100 BC, in his retelling of the story in Exodus that portrays the wonders Moses performed in front of the Egyptian Pharaoh, has the Pharaoh call on the priests who lived beyond Memphis to create a wonder (*teratourgein*), on peril of being killed and having their temples razed. The priests were bidden do this, because the staff that Moses had thrown to the ground had been transformed into a snake and because Moses had caused the Nile to inundate the land by striking it with his staff. Their response was to use magical devices (*manganai*) and incantations (*epaoidai*) to create a snake and to change the color of the Nile (*FGrH* 726 fr. 3.27–31). For Artapanus the Egyptian priests are magicians who perform the tricks that were in all likelihood the stock-in-trade of the magicians of his day, snake-handling and effecting changes in the colors of liquids; an explanation of how wine could be made to change color from white to red was contained in a

handbook of magical tricks that may belong to the late hellenistic period (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.7.1–2).

Some further information about the tricks magicians performed can be extracted from a story told by Diodorus Siculus about the spectacular entry into Iolcus in Thessaly that Medea devised. She did so by giving the impression that she was making her entry under the aegis of the goddess Artemis. First of all, she created a hollow statue of the goddess and concealed within it all manner of special substances; as for her own appearance, she used peculiar potencies to make her hair white and her skin wrinkled, so that she looked like an old woman. She entered the city as day broke; she herself behaved as one possessed; the crowds who gathered were told to receive the goddess with all due respect, since she had come from the land of the Hyperboreans for the benefit of the city and its king. Her next move was to enter the royal residence, where her arrival threw the king and his daughters into fearful consternation. They were told that Artemis had come through the air riding on serpents to establish herself in Iolcus, which she had chosen because of the piety of its people; she herself had been bidden by the goddess to strip the king of his old age and make him young again with the help of certain potencies. The king was persuaded of Medea's powers when she emerged in her former appearance from the room to which she had retired; there, she had cleansed her body of the potencies that had been applied to it. She used further magical devices (*pharmaka*) to create the likenesses of the snakes that were supposed to have borne Artemis across the heavens to Iolcus. To convince the daughters of the king that she was able to make their father young again by chopping him up and placing the parts in a cauldron of boiling water, she dismembered an elderly ram and put the parts into a cauldron, from which she then took out the likeness of a lamb, an effect achieved by employing magical devices (*pharmaka*) to deceive the daughters (4.51–52.2).

Medea's first trick is with the statue of Artemis. We are not told what the statue did, but we should probably imagine that it moved or that it threw off a bright light. (Statues that moved were part of the repertoire of the tricks magicians had in their bag in later times; theurgists exploited the same trick: Iamblichus, *Mysteries* 3.28–9; Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 1.5; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical Histories* 9.3; Rufinus, *Ecclesiastical History* 9.2–3, 11.23. The Neoplatonic philosopher Maximus is said to have made a statue of Hecate smile and then laugh and to have caused the torches she carried in her hands to burst into flame. The performance is described by a hostile witness as that of a *thaumatopoios*: Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists* 7.2.7–10.) Next, there is Medea's transformation into an aged hag and her return to her former self (for magicians effecting changes in their own appearance: Plato, *Euthydemus* 288b8; *Republic* 380d1–383a5). Then there is the creation of the images of the snakes that are supposed to have carried Artemis through the skies. Finally, there is the slaughter and dismemberment of the elderly ram and its reappearance in the form of a lamb pulled out of the cauldron in which it had been boiled. (A version of the same story is to be found at Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.297–323. To judge from Empedocles D-K 31 B 111.1, magicians may have boasted of being able to restore youth.) These are all illusions attested at a later period. The presumption must be that they were practiced in the hellenistic period and that Diodorus' source was a man who was familiar with them. He used that familiarity to explain how Medea succeeded in convincing the daughters of the king to allow her to kill and dismember their

father. The author of the account does not imagine that Medea's magic-working created a reality; twice he speaks of illusions (*eidōla*) being created and once of an illusion and a deceit worked on the spectators by magical devices. He does not suppose, as we might, that Medea's feats can be explained scientifically as illusions; he believes that she uses magic to create the illusion.

We would be better placed to understand something of the social dynamics of magic-working in our period if we knew what the relationship was between the public performance by magicians of magical tricks and the enactment of spells designed to affect the behavior and physical condition both of parties other than the magician and the magician himself. Were the magicians who carried out what to our eyes are very different forms of magic one and the same person or did they belong to quite separate worlds? Did they, for instance, exploit the credence that their public performances won them to offer help in personal matters? Present-day itinerant Indian street magicians sell to the crowds who have witnessed them beheading a pigeon and restoring it to life gems or rings that they say gave them the power to perform the feat; the crowd is told that the same stones will bring their bearer back from death; their sale is the principal source of income for the magician (Siegel 1991:68–70, 90–2, 100, 117, 157). One suspects that something like this went on in classical antiquity. There is a considerable body of evidence from the high Roman empire that points to magicians both practicing wonder-working and casting spells designed to affect alterations in the behavior or fortunes of others. The chances are that in classical and hellenistic Greece wonder-working went hand in hand with the more lucrative business of personal magic.

Practitioners

The identity of the persons to whom their fellows turned for help because they were reputedly expert in magic is cloaked in obscurity. Part of the reason for our ignorance is that such persons probably came in the main from reaches of society in which our literary sources have no interest. Chance references afford us a few tantalizing glimpses of this hidden world. In Plato's *Republic* we hear of persons described as begging priests (*agurtai*) and seers (*manteis*) making their way to the doors of rich men and promising to free them from the effect of the misdeeds of their ancestors and themselves. The cleansing was to be accomplished by initiating them into mysteries and subjecting them to purificatory rituals. Not only did the itinerant beggar-priests-cum-seers offer purification, they were also prepared, for a small consideration, to harm someone's enemy, no matter whether he deserved it or not, using hauntings and bindings; the gods would be persuaded to serve them (364b5–c5). There is a very real possibility that Plato has not given a wholly unprejudiced picture of the activities of the itinerant beggar-priests. There will nonetheless be a kernel of truth to it; there will in Athens in the fourth century BC and no doubt in other Greek cities have been wandering holy men who professed to be able, because of an expertise in rituals that enlisted the gods on their side, to cast spells that harmed enemies. The precise origins of the beggar-priests-cum-seers is necessarily veiled in darkness, but what can be said about them is that they are rootless figures from the margins of society.

Theocritus sheds light on other forms of magic-worker in his portrayal of a courtesan deserted by her lover attempting to bring him back by means of magic, to which we referred above. The setting of the poem is likely to be the island of Kos in the southeastern Aegean. In the course of performing her magical rituals, the woman recalls how, after seeing her lover for the first time, she had approached old women who performed incantations, to seek their help in bringing him to her (*Idyll* 2.90–1). Later she threatens to kill the errant lover, if the spells with which she is currently trying to ensnare him have no effect; she will employ the spells/drugs (*pharmaka*) she has obtained from a foreigner, a Syrian, and which she keeps in a chest (2.159–62). The poem, accordingly, presents us with a courtesan adept at performing a binding spell, old women to whom courtesans turn for their expertise in incantations and a Syrian, knowledgeable about spells and drugs that kill. It conjures up a *demi-monde* in which prostitutes are themselves expert in magical rituals, in which there are old women skilled in incantations with whom prostitutes consort and in which are to be found persons from the eastern reaches of the now greatly extended Greek world who enjoy a certain cachet for their knowledge of magic.

Law and Magic

In Plato's *Meno*, Socrates' interlocutor, Meno, says in exasperation at being reduced to a state of helpless inarticulacy that Socrates has worked his sorcery, magic, and incantations on him; it is as well, he says, that Socrates never ventures outside Athens, since, if he were to do so and were a stranger in another city, he would be subject to summary arrest as a sorcerer or *goēs* (79e7–80b7). The implication of the assertion is at the very least that in some Greek cities foreigners found practicing sorcery were unwelcome and that measures would be taken against them. Whether it was true is another matter. Plato may have been extrapolating from what he knew about his own city to what went on in other cities. We do know that measures were taken against sorcerers, or rather sorceresses, in Athens. The sorceress, a woman from the island of Lemnos, from whom the man who promised cures for epilepsy is supposed to have inherited his drugs and incantations is said to have been executed by the Athenians with all her issue ([Demosthenes] 25.79). So far as is known, there were no laws in Athens against sorcery as such. Prosecutions seem to have been brought against Athenians suspected of sorcery under the law affecting impiety or *asebeia*. What happened elsewhere is not known.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

The most comprehensive account of magic in the Greek and Roman worlds in English is Graf 1997, which is a translation from the French of Graf 1994. Graf 1996 is a revised version in German of Graf 1994. R. Gordon 1999 is a sophisticated overview of the same subject. Luck 1985 contains a useful collection of sources in translation accompanied by explanatory essays. As a source book it has to some extent been superseded by Ogden 2002. Specifically on love magic in the Greek-speaking world there is Faraone 1999, an essay with a very special point of

view, which is markedly more favorable to ancient women than men. Its intellectual antecedents are in an influential paper by Winkler in Winkler 1990a. There is a useful collection of curse tablets in English translation accompanied by a series of essays dealing with different categories of the same object in Gager 1992. Ogden 1999 is also helpful on curse tablets. Necromancy in Greece and Rome is dealt with in Ogden 2001. Johnston 1999a confines her attention to the Greek-speaking world; she argues for the thesis that *goētes* were originally persons who specialized in summoning the dead by their cries of lamentation, *gooi*. Dickie 2001 deals with the identity of magicians in the Greco-Roman world. It does not pay sufficient attention to magicians as conjurers and creators of illusions.

PART VIII

Intersections: Greek Religion and . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Greek Religion and Literature

Thomas Harrison

The Use of Literary Texts in the Study of Greek Religion

The title of this chapter might suggest that literature is marginal to the subject of "religion" in the Greek world, that its role is primarily or exclusively as an imperfect source of evidence for "lived" religious experience – in other words for ritual. It is probably best at the outset to confront such ideas head-on.

Of course, it is difficult to reconstruct the experience of reading or hearing (or indeed performing) an ancient work of literature; we can have no unmediated access – but then no more can we to other forms of evidence, or other forms of religious experience (if we take the example of the Panathenaea, even the celebrant's view of the Parthenon frieze requires painstaking reconstruction: R. Osborne 1987). Of course also, different works throw up different issues of genre and context. It is for this reason that most studies of "literary religion" have focused on particular works or genres (or have sought to compare two genres: Parker 1997; see further the Guide to Further Reading below), precisely to foreground the distinct aspects of those genres, and to avoid appearing to claim that any single author or work is representative of "Greek religion" more broadly. As a result of this, different ancient genres (tragedy, oratory, or historiography) have all, in one way or another, been argued to be divorced from the real world of lived religion. Even in the case of historical writers – one might suppose, less problematic – attempts to uncover a given author's (or more broadly to extrapolate common Greek) religious attitudes are vulnerable to the charge of confusing the narrator and the author, or of underestimating the author's distinct "take" on his material (how is one to distinguish between the "base" of cultural commonplace and presupposition and an author's variations on it?).

The difficulties are perhaps greatest in the case of Greek tragedy, a particular focus for discussion of these methodological problems. The religion of tragedy, it has been

maintained, is a "hothouse plant which never did and probably never could exist or survive in real life" (Mikalson 1991:ix). Both the plot and the mythical setting of most tragedies clearly make it impossible for us to, as it were, read the conditions of everyday Athenian religion from the pages of Sophocles – and yet it does not follow that the Athenian audience saw the events of a tragedy as a hermetically sealed dramatic experience, removed from everyday experience. The gods and heroes of tragedy are the gods and heroes of contemporary cult and mythology; in many cases, indeed, tragedies represent the origin of a familiar cult (Sourvinou-Inwood 1997 on the *Iphigenia in Tauris*).

Just to assert, however, that there are *links* between the religion of literature and that of "real life" is insufficient. As Robert Parker has written, again in the context of Greek tragedy, though the "religion of tragedy" cannot be related to "real religion" in a "simple formula," it is not therefore to be treated apart: "Tragedy is complex and heterogeneous; 'real religion' too is not that simple and (as it were) solid and almost material thing that one may in unguarded moments suppose, but is itself a jostling mass of competing beliefs and values and interpretations and uncertainties" (Parker 1997:148). One might even go further, jettison the quotation marks, and declare that the various imaginary worlds of Greek literature themselves *constitute* Greek religious experience. It is arguable that we focus on the limitations of literary evidence for Greek religion excessively. Though it is worthwhile to know where any author is developing or critiquing a general consensus (and worthwhile equally to judge where the vast majority of authors overlap in their attitudes and presuppositions), if a sentiment expressed by Xenophon or Herodotus, say, is distinctly Xenophontic or Herodotean, or if a tragedy is set in a distinctly archaic and mythical world atypical of contemporary Athens, it is not therefore devalued. As Denis Feeney has put it succinctly, "the challenge is to put the right adverb in front of the word 'literary': not 'merely' but 'distinctively' " (Feeney 1998:41). Moreover we should not underestimate the extent of overlap between the religious presuppositions of a variety of authors.

There is another underlying difficulty here, however: that is, the primacy of ritual in the modern study of Greek religion. Ritual activity is perceived as the substance of Greek religious experience; conceptions of the divine as at best secondary and dependent on ritual. (In the words of Feeney again, "ritual has become a kind of trump card: if you can prove that something has reference to cult, you are proving that it means something": 1998:10.) This has had a profound effect on the body of literature that is usually the object of study. Greek religion, as is frequently stated, possessed no discrete body of sacred texts (Bremmer 1994:1; Burkert 1985:8; Price 1998:3). Modern scholars tend, nevertheless, to single out a distinct body of Greek literature as of particular relevance. So, for example, in his introduction to *Religions of the Greeks*, Simon Price includes in a list of sources for the subject Hesiod's *Theogony* (but not his *Works and Days*), Euripides' *Bacchae* (but no other Greek tragedy), Andocides *on the Mysteries* and Lysias 6 *Against Andocides*, as evidence of "threats to the civic system" (but no other Greek oratory) (Price 1998:184–5) – all this despite his claim to "look outwards from religion to other contexts." Walter Burkert, in his classic *Greek Religion*, declares that he will confine himself largely to "sacred texts," admitting at the same time that they are "scarcely to be found" (1985:4).

Texts such as Xenophon's *Anabasis* or Herodotus' *Histories* – perhaps not so overtly "religious" in content as the *Theogony* or Andocides' *On the Mysteries*, or so religious in context as Attic tragedy with its performance within festivals of Dionysus – receive attention only rarely and for a limited set of purposes. For Burkert, the first Greek historians of the fifth century deserve a mention insofar as they introduce "customs, the *dromena* or rituals . . . in conjunction with the mythical narratives" (Burkert 1985:5); likewise, Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel single out Herodotus, tragedy, comedy, and oratory for their contributions to the "study of religious practices" (1992:17–18). An alternative approach is to summarize the literary evidence for, say, the role of divine intervention in Greek historical writing in so condensed a form as, first, to suggest that any instances are at best isolated, with little to do with the prevailing attitudes of their societies, and secondly, to give no sense of how such a view (that divine intervention is possible) might be seriously sustainable (e.g. Price 1998:131–3; for the sustainability of belief, see further below). It comes as little surprise to discover the conclusion that such beliefs were rare:

> The divine clearly had some role to play, but it was needed as an explanation only in default of other explanations. In this respect most historians were close to the thought-world of their contemporaries: though the gods obviously existed, only in exceptional circumstances would an individual be sure that one of them had intervened in his or her life. (Price 1998:133)

The procedure is essentially self-fulfilling: the marginalization of literary evidence is both justified by, and at the same time *confirms*, the centrality of ritual.

The Sustainability of the Religious Proposition: "All unjust acts are punished by divine intervention"

In order to break out of this circle, we need then, first, to include in the study of religion a broader range of literary sources. Far from there being a distinct and bounded corpus of relevant texts, the entire Greek literary production should be taken into account – as it was indeed by scholars of a previous generation, notably E.R. Dodds (1951), Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1971), or Kenneth Dover (1974; cf. 1972): oratory, historiography, philosophy, tragedy, and comedy, as well as a miscellany of more minor or fragmentary works. Even those rare texts, such as Thucydides' *History*, which in certain areas appear to eschew common religious attitudes, are relevant – insofar as they allow us to identify those areas of religious thought that were subject to criticism or skepticism and those that were not (contrast the perspectives of Hornblower 1992 and Marinatos 1981). In the words of John Gould, we should aim to "take in the whole range of the evidence, liturgical and literary, and to make sense of it as a whole whose parts are meaningfully related to each other" (1985:32). We also need, secondly, to ask a wider set of questions. The value of such literary texts does not consist solely in isolated mentions of certain ritual practices, or even in their evidence of the consequences of fulfillment or non-fulfillment of ritual in Greek thought ("Every failure of due observance was thought to provoke divine anger and retribution": Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992:28; cf. R. Osborne

1994:144) but also in the attitudes that they express and presuppose in almost any number of other areas.

A crucial point here is not to see these texts as static, presenting us with a mere list of propositions about the gods or their intervention in human life, but instead to recognize the interrelationship between different propositions, and thus to examine how such propositions were sustainable in the light of experience. This is an approach which can be traced back in modern anthropological literature through Godfrey Lienhardt and Edward Evans-Pritchard as far back as E.B. Tylor (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 1956; Lienhardt 1961; cf. Skorupski 1976:4–5), but which can also be found implicit in earlier classical scholarship (Dodds 1951:33; Dover 1974:133–44, 156–7, 241–2, 246–8, 1972:33; Lloyd-Jones 1971:3, 134): that propositions concerning divine intervention require the prior existence of "blocks to falsifiability," or "let-out clauses," in order to be sustained. It is best explained by way of analogy to a different context. If one feels an unshakable belief in, say, the honesty and public-spiritedness of politicians, evidence to the contrary (the disclosure, for example, that a prime minister or minister gave favors in exchange for gifts or loans) will need to be explained away: for example, by saying that this individual is an unrepresentative "bad apple," that the problem is only one of unfortunate perception (fueled by the disreputable press), or – especially if one's concern is for the honesty of politicians of only one party – that it is a fault with the system, one which applies to all parties equally. (One need not suppose that the individual who holds to this belief, regardless of apparently contrary evidence, is disingenuous in their original commitment.)

To take now an extended ancient example, a number of authors reveal the assumption that certain actions will inevitably provoke divine retribution. This is made clear: through repeated proverbial remarks, for example Theognis' warning to Polypaides on the dangers of deceiving a guest or suppliant ("No mortal . . . has yet escaped the notice of the immortals," 143–4; cf. Theognis 197–208, Solon fr. 13 West); through extended moral tales (the Herodotean story of Glaucus, 6.86; cf. Herodotus 4.205, Lysias 6.1–2, Andocides 1.29–30, Lycurgus, *Leocrates* 95–7); and through passing assumptions (cf. Herodotus 1.159.4, 2.139.2 with Harrison 2000:103–4). These actions can often be described as acts of sacrilege (so, for example, perjury, the failure to respect suppliants, or the killing of envoys) but by no means always: a number of "injustices" (unprovoked violence, for example) also attract retribution, as well apparently as a man's intentions or broader disposition (Herodotus 6.86, Solon fr. 13 West, Theognis 897–900). At the same time, reversals in fortune are frequently interpreted as due to an earlier misdemeanor. In some cases, where an individual is held to have committed numerous acts of sacrilege or injustice, an ancient author might concede a lack of certainty in attributing a comeuppance to a particular crime (Lycurgus, *Leocrates* 91); in other cases, where for example the very same men responsible for sacrilege are singled out for punishment or where there is a degree of appropriateness in the timing or nature of the punishment, there is no doubt (e.g., the Potidaea floodtide, Herodotus 8.129).

Clearly, however, the assumption that all unjust acts will be punished by direct divine intervention would be a difficult, if not actually impossible, one to sustain. But this assumption or belief can be reconciled with experience by means of a number of "let-out clauses":

Retribution is rarely direct. It does not always take the form of direct, divine intervention (for example, through divine epiphanies), but can come through more believable forms of intervention, more believable because they actually happen: roofs falling in, disease, madness, or even through human agency. There is nothing necessarily miraculous (because otherwise impossible) or ostensibly divine about the form of the retribution. The deduction that a misfortune is divine in origin is made on the basis either of timing (i.e., immediate, sudden, or delayed) or appropriateness (i.e., you or your father were known on inspection to have done such and such a terrible thing). So, for example (according to Xenophon in his account of the march of the Ten Thousand), if Clearchus had broken the terms of a truce and so committed perjury, his massacre would be deserved, as it is "just that perjurers should be destroyed" (*Anabasis* 2.5.38, 41). Prayers to the gods for revenge against an enemy do not envisage any agent of revenge but the author of the prayer (e.g. Theognis 337–50).

The gods do not punish every offence. In many cases they may be happy to leave vengeance to other men, only stepping in when that punishment is inadequate or excessive. "Leave the undetected sinner to the justice of the gods" (Demosthenes 19.70–1). The punishment of the Herodotean Pheretime – whose crime had been to impale all the men of the city of Barca and to cut off the breasts of their wives, in revenge for the death of her son Arcesilaus – revealed that "the *over-harsh* vengeances of men are abominated by the gods; she became infested with worms who ate her alive" (4.205). (The advantage that the gods have over men in this role of regulating human justice is that they cannot be hoodwinked: Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.4.21; cf. Archilochus fr. 177 West). In order to sustain this rather detached regulatory role on the part of the gods, human vengeance needs to be relied upon as the ongoing backdrop to occasional divine intervention – hence the regular insistence of our sources on the duty of vengeance, a duty incumbent on men from the gods (Lycurgus, *Leocrates* 146–50; Demosthenes 24.125, [Demosthenes] 59.116; Lysias 13.3; cf. 13.92).

Next, the gods know to look beyond single faults and punish only the pattern of offending behavior; so, though certain single acts may be punished, there is no point in looking for a corresponding punishment for every act. God is not "angry at mortal men for every fault" (Theognis 897). Proper "respect and fear" of the gods, on the other hand, restrain a man "from impious deed or word" (Theognis 1179–80). Xenophon's Agesilaus, or the Ten Thousand of the *Anabasis*, focus on acting consistently in such a way that the gods will be their allies – and their enemies' enemies (they are helped here by their enemies' repeated perjury: Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.11, *Anabasis* 3.121–3). This principle gives the belief in divine retribution a crucial flexibility – and provides a useful response to an obvious criticism, which surfaces for example in the context of the manipulation of oaths, that divine retribution is unduly legalistic in its workings and so allows an unjust outcome in the name of piety (e.g. Lysias 12.98).

Punishment may be delayed. The perpetrator of a crime can never be certain then that retribution does not still await him. "The minds of men" according to Theognis (197–208; cf. Solon fr. 13 West), "are misled, since the blessed gods do not punish sin at the time of the very act, but one man pays his evil debt

himself and does not cause doom to hang over his dear progeny later, while another is not overtaken by justice; before that, ruthless death settles on his eyelids, bringing doom." This possibility of deferred retribution gives some hope to those who are thwarted in their revenges (Theognis 337–50; Lysias 6.19–20). Andocides' going about his business unpunished is seen indeed as evidence of his very brazenness, his life in advance of punishment full of "terrors and dangers"; similarly a fragment of Lysias portrays a man guilty of sacrilege as having been singled out – because of the extraordinary nature of his crimes – for a living death of near-endless illness (fr. 9.4 Albini [*Against Cinesias*], *apud* Athenaeus 551a–552b). Even the *anticipation* of ultimate punishment is considered enough of an interim punishment by Clearchus in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, so certain is the fact of retribution (2.5.7–8).

Delay in punishment can, of course, extend beyond the lifetime of the perpetrator of the crime. The punishment of children in place of their parents is something about which a wide range of ancient authors – at one level at least – apparently felt no qualms (contrast Theognis 731–52). As the orator Lycurgus proclaims, in the context of a famous passage on the importance of the oath, "If the perjured man does not suffer himself, at least his children and all his family are overtaken by dire misfortunes" (*Leocrates* 79; cf. Demosthenes 57.27). As this last passage suggests, however, for one's punishment to fall on one's children is a kind of longstop rather than the preferred outcome (cf. Isocrates, *Peace* 120). Punishment may also be inflicted on the perpetrator himself after his death. The idea that unjust or impious actions in life might be, indeed *will* be, punished after death is common not only in Platonic texts – in the descriptions of the different routes to Hades of pure and impure souls in the *Phaedo* (107d–108c), for example, or of the judgment of those near death in the *Gorgias* (523a–524b) – but also in forensic oratory (Demosthenes 25.53, 24.104) or in the words of the semi-philosophical Isocrates (Isocrates, *Peace* 33–4; cf. Isocrates, *Antidosis* 282): "those who live a life of piety and justice pass their days in security for the present and have sweeter hopes for all eternity [*tou sumpantos aiōnos*]"; the immediate pleasure of those who take something that belongs to others is like the pleasure of an animal that has been 'lured by a bait': Isocrates, *Peace* 33–4; cf. *Antidosis* 282).

The gods or the divine are not always just; people do not always get what they deserve. While misfortunes are frequently seen as evidence of divine justice, they can also be seen as the work of a capricious and essentially amoral divine; human fortune (in general seen as coming from the gods) is by definition changeable and unpredictable. This is an extraordinarily common idea over a wide period, reflected in a set of related aphorisms or gnomic pronouncements repeated throughout Greek literature: that one can never know the outcome of any matter until the end; that human knowledge is never certain; that the gods raise men up and cast them down; that fortune passes from one man to another; that human fortune is always mixed (or more darkly that suffering is inevitable, or that death comes to all men (so leveling their worldly prosperity) (for references see, e.g., Harrison 2000:38–9). Such expressions might seem to modern readers to be mere empty proverbs (indeed they were seen as well-worn lines by contemporaries: Andocides 2.5–6; Herodotus 7.51.3); they remained in currency, however, throughout the classical period.

That the gods are simultaneously represented as characteristically (if not quite exclusively) just and also as characteristically unjust might reasonably be taken to be a contradiction. There are a number of ways of trying (or failing) to reconcile this body of ideas with the assumption of a pattern of just reward and retribution. Reversals of fortune can be supposed to be themselves just, the result of an individual's overreaching (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.6.44–6). Another possibility is to make a distinction between different classes of divinity. (For, as the author of the Aristotelian *Magna Moralia* puts it, if we assign the dispensation of good and evil to god, "we shall be making him a bad judge or else unjust," 1207a6–17.) Isocrates, for example, distinguishes the Olympians (exemplarily benign, if not just: "those who bless us with good things") and *daimones* ("those who are agents of calamities and punishments": Isocrates, *Philippus* 117). For some, the unevenness of justice is simply the way of the world: "we may both expect blessings and pray for them, but we must reflect that all things are conditioned by mortality" (Demosthenes 20.160–1). This can also be expressed in terms of the character of the gods: that the gods have the capacity to do bad things (though it is not their fundamental character, Aristotle, *Topics* 125a34–b3); that they can take their eye off the ball (Isocrates, *Panathenaicus* 186); or, most commonly, that they are resentful of human fortune (Theognis 657–66, Herodotus 1.32.1; contrast Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b29–983a4). For others, the injustice of the gods – the possibility of undeserved misfortune or that "sinners and the just man are held in the same esteem" – is a problem or a cause of complaint (e.g., Theognis 373–400, cf. 585–90, 731–52). In general, however, the availability of different explanations for misfortune (at its simplest, retribution or sheer misfortune) and the absence of any dogmatic certainty as to whether ill fortune comes from the gods, fate, chance or *daimones* – far from constituting a problem – provides the necessary flexibility whereby the belief in the possibility of divine retribution can be maintained (see further Versnel 1990:1–38). Misfortunes can silently be filed, as it were, depending on the circumstances.

This kind of approach can be replicated in other areas of Greek religious experience. As we will see further below, Greek confidence in the efficacy of oracles and other forms of divination in securing guidance for action (and insight into the future) from the gods depends similarly on a number of let-out clauses (see especially Harrison 2000:122–57; Parker 1985; and Chapter 9 of this volume): the misrepresentation, selection or misinterpretation of a prophecy need not affect the institution fundamentally. Likewise there are a number of potential "let-out clauses" for Greek confidence in the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice: ritual impurity; the nature of the accompanying prayer (i.e., what was asked for); or the proviso, which significantly blurs the distinction between ritual observance and everyday actions, that a man's life (his consistent propitiation of the god, through good times and bad, his just and sober living) must be taken in the round (e.g., Xenophon, *Hipparchicus* 9.8–9; *Cyropaedia* 8.1.23; cf. 1.6.3–4; Isocrates, *Areopagiticus* 29–30; see further Harrison forthcoming: ch. 2; Pulleyn 1997). The range of other such propositions to which Greek literature attests is such that any attempt at a list would be futile. One idea that requires particular emphasis, however, insofar as it arguably underpins much of Greek religious thought , is the principle of the unknowability of the gods, one which (as has

been emphasized by a number of scholars: Gould 1985, 1994:94; Rudhardt 1992:88, 90, 101–6; Sourvinou-Inwood 1990:20, 1997:162; also Harrison 2000:191–2) is common to a range of authors, both those we might term "religious critics" and others usually conceived to be more traditionally pious. Far from being suggestive of a common religious agnosticism, or from qualifying traditional conceptions of the divine (and far from being just a reflection of the lack of clear divine revelation in Greek religion), "unknowability" in fact serves as a *necessary complement* to traditional conceptions: it was precisely because of the fall-back position that the best way to approach and the best way to envisage the gods were matters inaccessible to men that traditional attributes and forms of worship could continue unchallenged.

The Complexity of Religious Discourse in Literary Sources and its Importance

What are the consequences of this broader literary perspective on Greek religion? Arguably, it opens up (or reopens) a new dimension of Greek religious experience: a body of religious thought which – like ritual itself, but often independently – operates, in the words of John Gould, as "a framework of explanation for human experience" (1985:7).

These areas have, of course, been the subject of significant study. In general, however, such work has been marginal in the study of Greek religion. (So, for example, the subject-matter of Parker's splendid series of studies of "literary religion," e.g. 1997, 1998, 1999, 2004, finds little place in his two major studies of Athenian religion: 1996, 2005.). At the same time, however, it should be pointed out that even those major studies that most loudly proclaim the centrality of ritual cannot exclude this dimension of religious experience entirely. "[H]owever much the Greeks may hope that good things will flow from pious acts, they are nevertheless aware that fulfilment is not guaranteed, but lies in the lap of the gods" (Burkert 1985:7). "Only an atheist will demand statistical proof that pious action is successful" in protecting the seafarer from storms (Burkert 1985:55; cf. 268). Here, at least implicitly, is the acknowledgment in condensed form that the proposition that gods intervene in ordinary life (through storms, or through the answering of human sacrifice) requires the existence of "blocks to falsifiability," or "let-out clauses," in order to be maintained. Similarly, for example, in what might be described as the taxonomical approach to Greek religion – in other words, the classification of deities and their attributes (see the comments of Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992:183; Burkert 1985:216) – the description of a god's attributes *necessarily* implies an assumption in the possibility of divine intervention. "A direct epiphany of Zeus is lightning" (Burkert 1985:126). The storm is the epiphany of the sea-god Poseidon, "always to be reckoned with by seafarer and fisherman" (Burkert 1985:137).

What is the status of such characterizations? For whom does Poseidon reveal himself through storms? The available literary evidence allows for the enormous elaboration of these areas of "belief." That voyages by sea required the propitiation of the gods, or that safe crossings demanded thank offerings, is reflected in a wide

range of sources, but this evidence presents us with more than simply an ordering of natural phenomena in a static grid of divinities (cf. Bremmer 1994:6). Rather, the assumption that Poseidon, or the gods in general, are responsible for storms or earthquakes is marshaled in a whole range of ways in different contexts. So, for example, the defendant in the trial *On the Murder of Herodes*, introduces the fact that no fellow-traveler on a sea voyage had been involved in disaster, and that all sacrifices on board ship in his presence had gone smoothly, as evidence of his innocence (Antiphon 5.81–4). What to do with Andocides, however, accused of the charge of profaning the Mysteries, but clearly the survivor of numerous sea voyages? His prosecutors argued (but he denied) that the gods had preserved him from punishment at sea precisely so that he might undergo trial in Athens (Andocides 1.137–9; Lysias 6.19–20, 31–2). In part, this variety can be put down to rhetorical convenience. (Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, and the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* blew the lid off all the seemingly sincere protestations of forensic oratory by providing a guide to how to play the game of oaths, offering sophistic arguments to suit every eventuality: Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1377a12; [Aristotle] *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 1432a34–b4; cf. Demosthenes 54.38–41; Isocrates, *Demonicus* 23.) It is also, however, testament to the malleability of such religious beliefs, to the presence of a live religious discourse that can be adapted to different, conflicting ends. In the subsequent recitation of Andocides' miseries, we glimpse also the way in which such beliefs are reinforced through repetitive moralizing: no man should become "less considerate of the gods" (*atheōterous*) through seeing Andocides saved from death, for a long life lived in distress is worse than a short one without pain (cf. Harrison 2000:247).

The appreciation of the complexity of the Greek religious discourse preserved in literary sources also leads to a very different understanding of historical change in Greek religion. Xenophon's *Anabasis*, his account of the journey to safety of the "Ten Thousand" Greek mercenaries stranded in the heart of the Persian empire, has been exploited largely as evidence of how widespread was the *practice* of seeking divine guidance, through consultation at Delphi, through dreams, or through the examination of the entrails of sacrificial victims (Price 1998:1–3; contrast Parker 2004). Instances in which the outcome of divination is disputed or even questioned as fraudulent reflect, we are told for example, a "defensiveness" in Xenophon's attitude to divination – as if such doubts simply *qualified* the widespread practice of divination; as if, that is, only two discrete stances were possible towards divination: credulity (Xenophon's own stance) or skepticism (one which lapped about him). As Edward Evans-Pritchard famously demonstrated of the Azande, however (1937), and as others have, in fact, demonstrated of the Greeks (especially Parker 1985), the possibility of fraudulence may actually serve as one of a number of *supports* to the belief in divination: fraudulence provides a way of dismissing inconvenient advice, or of explaining the non-fulfillment of a prophecy. The failure to appreciate the *relationship* of different propositions concerning divination – that is, how together they operate to reinforce confidence – leads to the underestimation of the resilience of that confidence, and to a false impression of change: Xenophon's acknowledgment of fraudulence in divination (or his "defensiveness") may be interpreted as a reflection of Greek doubts concerning the validity of divination, rather than, in fact, as a symptom of its life (see also here Bowden 2005).

Another consequence of the failure to appreciate the complexity of Greek religious attitudes is the excessive prominence given to views apparently critical of traditional religion. The expression of criticism of any single aspect of religious practice or ideology (divination, say, or the unjust man going unpunished) is commonly taken as a criticism of Greek religion as a whole; if however, we cease thinking of Greek religious thought as a single inflexible whole, one dent to which is fatally destructive, such criticism of a single aspect becomes transformed from an "anti-religious" act to a religious one (see Harrison 2000:13–14). As Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood has underlined repeatedly, "'exploring' must not be confused with 'criticizing'" (1997:185, 2003; cf. Kearns 1996:513–14); she has consequently declared the tragedians' "alleged challenge to the religious discourse of the polis" to be a "modern mirage" (1998b:55; see now especially 2003:291–458). With the evidence of non-philosophical literature for Greek conceptions of the divine largely elided, philosophical literature also tends to stand out artificially. So, for example, a common emphasis on the lack of contact between philosophical developments, or more broadly "religious thought," on the one hand, and "lived religion" (i.e., myth and ritual action) on the other: "the picture of religion as practised changes hardly at all, in spite of the deeds of all the intellectual heroes" (Burkert 1985:305, cf. 317; Price 1998:126; Bremmer 1982; contrast Humphreys 2004:51–76). It is only, however, by setting philosophical developments against pre-existing conceptions of the divine that we can begin to ask (in Parker's words, of the sophistic movement) "what in all this was truly threatening or 'impious'; what constituted an attack from without rather than from within the traditional religious framework, that loose and accommodating structure within which certain forms of doubt, criticism, and revision were, in fact, traditional" (1996:210; cf. C. Osborne 1997).

Challenges to the Principal Tenets of Modern Scholarship on Greek Religion

Finally, a focus on "literary religion" unsettles some of the principal tenets of modern scholarship on Greek religion (what Robert Garland has described tellingly as a "negative catechism" [Garland 1994:ix]; see further Bendlin 2001; Harrison 2000:1–30).

Greek religion is concerned, not with the individual (and his soul), but the community. Greek religion, according to Jan Bremmer, for example, "was "embedded"; it was public and communal rather than private and individual" (Bremmer 1994:1; cf. Cartledge 1992:xv; R. Osborne 1994:144); parallel to this is the position that emotion is not a valid criterion for religious experience (e.g. Price 1984:10; cf. I. Morris 1993:24). This last point is surely right, but not (as is sometimes held) because it reflects modern "Christianizing" assumptions; it would be no more adequate as a criterion of modern (Christian) religious experience (Evans-Pritchard 1965:44; cf. Skorupski 1976:144). At the same time, Greek literature throws up ample evidence of a "warm piety" towards the gods which has been passed over or dismissed as exceptional (Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992:13–15) – the many references to "dear gods" (Parker

1998:124–5), or the opening words of the archaic poet Theognis, promising devoted attention to Apollo in return for success in his poetry: "O lord, son of Leto, child of Zeus, I will never forget you at the beginning or at the end, but I will ever sing of you first, last, and in between. . . ." (Though Aristotle is often cited on the impossibility of a man loving a god, the passages in question are taken out of their broader context: see Parker 1998:123–4.) The opposition of individual and community is again, at least, over-drawn. Greek religion, there should be no doubt, reflected and reinforced community (at a number of levels: deme, phratry, tribe, as well as city: see especially Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, 1988b). The repeated insistence in Attic oratory on the need to punish wrongdoers in order to prevent divine vengeance from falling on the community as a whole shows that, in religious ideology as well as in ritual, individual and communal are often inseparable. (This is arguably not very surprising, and perhaps common to most religions: should we evaluate modern Christianity in terms only, or primarily, of the individual, immortal soul?) Equally, the pages of Herodotus' *Histories* turn up numerous examples of the religious adventures of individuals who either transcend or operate outside the constraints of the city.

The Greeks had no text(s) and no Church. "[Greek religion] was 'passed down' by word of mouth not through written texts . . . [it] lacked a religious establishment" (Bremmer 1994:1); "There are no sacred books, religious dogma or orthodoxy, but rather common practices" (Price 1998:3; cf. Burkert 1985:8). The absence in Greek religion of distinct "scriptures" or of an established priesthood is undeniable. Clearly, as a consequence, religious authority was configured very differently, but as reflection on Christianity (the assumed point of contrast to ancient religion) suggests, the difference is a relative rather than an absolute one. Notwithstanding attempts, alien to Greek religion, to impose uniformity of doctrine and practice (e.g. the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, intended so as "not to suffer unnecessary Disputations, Altercations, or Questions to be raised"), both scriptures and an organized church self-evidently fail to bring with them more than a degree of uniformity in doctrine or practice. (Evans-Pritchard went so far as to describe sacred texts as "the least significant part of religion": 1965:119.) Conversely, though in Greek religion Homer and Hesiod may not quite have constituted a "Greek bible" (as they have sometimes been termed) it is clear, for example, from Herodotus' account of how these authors fixed the characters and attributes of the Greek gods (2.53), that these authors were seen as possessing a special authority. They have been seen as "filling a gap" (Gould 1994:104–5; cf. Burkert 1985:120; Price 1998:67), the gap where creed or scripture might have been, but this is perhaps too negative a formulation. They provide, rather, one way, out of many – oral, written, and non-verbal (i.e., through imitation and participation in ritual: Burkert 1985:95) – of reinforcing continuity, and disguising change, in ideology and practice (Bremmer 1995). As discussed above, stories of divine retribution or of prayers miraculously fulfilled imply generalizing morals – that the gods are ever-present and watchful, that impiety will be punished, and so forth; they too are the vehicles of religious authority.

What mattered in Greek religion was ritual, not belief or dogma. 'Greek religion may then fairly be said to be ritualistic in the sense that it was the opposite of

dogmatic: it was not constructed around a unified set of doctrines, and it was above all the observance of rituals rather than fidelity to a dogma or belief that ensured the permanence of tradition and communal cohesiveness' (Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992:27, cf. 11, 101; see also Burkert 1985:8; R. Osborne 1994:144; Price 1998:3, 1984:11). This is not the place to discuss the relative merits of the term belief (or of alternatives such as religious 'knowledge') and its anachronistic overtones (see, e.g., Harrison 2000:1–30, and especially Feeney 1998:12–46). It is fair to say, in Denis Feeney's words, that "not all religions *place as high a value on belief* in key dogmas as does modern Christianity" (1998:13). Such stark contrasts, however, as between dogma and ritual offer us little more than a choice of caricatures. It is the area of religious experience that falls between these two poles, of "beliefs" that fall short of dogma, that literature – so long as it is read as not *merely literature* – can illuminate.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Studies on "literary religion" tend to focus on particular genres or individual works. So, for example, on the religion of tragedy, see especially Parker 1997 and 1999, Sourvinou-Inwood 1997, and especially now Sourvinou-Inwood 2003; contrast Mikalson 1991, emphasizing the distance between tragedy and "real life." For historiography see the overlapping studies of Harrison 2000 (and 2003) and Mikalson 2002 and 2003 on Herodotean religion (see also, importantly, Gould 1994); for Thucydides, contrast Hornblower 1992 and Marinatos 1981; for Xenophon's *Anabasis*, see especially Parker 2004. For Attic oratory, see Mikalson 1983 (largely a digest of passages by theme), and (for an insightful comparison of Attic oratory with tragedy) Parker 1997.

In addition to these studies on particular sources, there are also a small number of accessible studies of distinct themes: see especially Parker 1983 on ideas of pollution, Pulleyn 1997 on prayer, and Currie 2005 on the ideas underlying hero cult (focusing, though not exclusively, on Pindar). Two excellent introductions to Greek religion which focus on literary sources are Gould 1985 and Kearns 1996. For the theoretical questions surrounding "belief" see especially Feeney 1998:12–46.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Greek Religion and Philosophy: The God of the Philosopher

Fritz-Gregor Herrmann

> Von allen Geistern, die verneinen,
> Ist mir der Schalk am wenigsten zur Last.
> J.W. Goethe, *Faust*

A book on Greek philosophy would not be complete without a chapter on Greek religion, be it on "the theology of the early Greek philosophers," on "God and Greek philosophy," on "rational theology" or on "philosophy and religion." But it is much less clear whether a volume on Greek religion would be similarly incomplete without a chapter on Greek philosophy or on "philosophical religion." This is because, from at least the early fifth century onwards, theological thinking formed an integral part of philosophical thinking for some of the most influential early, Presocratic philosophers. By contrast, it is doubtful whether the religion of the many, i.e. that of the non-philosophers, was influenced in any substantial way by philosophical speculation concerning the divine in the classical or even the hellenistic period.

From a different perspective, few individuals in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are affected by the Greek gods in their everyday life, but no one in the Western world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is unaffected by Greek philosophy. The reason for both these aspects of the modern predicament are, of course, historical, and they are bound up with the history of the Christian Church in antiquity and especially in medieval and early modern times. For it was the Christian Church that released Western philosophy, which it had guarded for a thousand years, and Western philosophy shapes the life and the world-view of modern man. At the same time, many of the beliefs of followers of present-day monotheistic religions are informed by theological speculation initiated by the ancient Greek philosophers, while they are largely unaffected by the practice of ancient Greek religion.

These are the parameters for this treatment of an aspect of Greek philosophical theology. The philosopher with whose god, whose views of the divine, whose religion I shall be concerned is Plato. What came before him – in particular, for our purposes, the books by Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Empedocles – is available to us in fragmentary form only. This may be no accident. For all we know, the scope and depth of Plato's philosophical argument as well as those of his speculation about god, the

gods, and religion are unprecedented. And no later thought, no later thinker, is unaffected by Plato. This is true of Aristotle above all, whose books have had such a fascinating influence on Western thinking in general and that of the Christian Church in the West in particular.

The Theology of Plato's Dialogues

Studying ancient Greek theology differs from the rest of the study of ancient Greek religion in an important respect: despite the influence of tradition and cultural context, rational, philosophical reflection on religion, god, and the gods is very much bound up with the thinking of the individual Greek thinker. This applies as much to the theology of Plato as it does to the theology of, for example, Aeschylus. In consequence, a prerequisite to an understanding of Plato's theology is an understanding of, or at least an acquaintance with, the rest of Plato's philosophy. Obviously, this cannot be achieved in the present context. Instead, we shall begin with a brief, preliminary, dogmatic exposition of Plato's theology. A literal reading of his dialogues is likely to arrive at the following picture of the world:

There is a god who is good (*Republic* 2, *Timaeus*) and who, by virtue of his goodness, is incapable of wishing for anything other than what is good or doing anything other than what is good. This god is faced with an expanse of stuff, changeable and lacking all order. But because order is better than disorder, the god sets about, as a craftsman, a *dēmiourgos*, to set in order what he has found in disorder. He does so with reference to what is eternal, unchanging, and always the same as itself; these things he uses as models and examples, *paradeigmata* (*Timaeus*). They belong to the realm of what can be thought, *noēta*, not to the realm of what can be seen, *horata* (*Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Timaeus*). Since what is thus immutable is perceived by the thinking mind, *nous*, and since whatever has *nous* is better than anything that does not, the craftsman fashions *nous* into his creation (*Timaeus*). But in that which changes, i.e. in the constantly changing realm of stuff, *nous* can only be present in soul, *psychē* (*Sophist*, *Timaeus*, *Philebus*). So the craftsman's first task is to create a soul, so that the changeable world can share in that which does not change (*Timaeus*). Thus the world has soul (*Timaeus*, *Philebus*, *Laws* 10), and all that has soul in the world shares in that soul; highest among ensouled things are the gods created by the craftsman, next come human beings, created in turn by the gods, and after that all the other things that move by themselves (*Timaeus*). For of the two types of "moving," "moving" caused by something else and "moving" moving by itself, it is soul that moves by itself (*Phaedrus*, *Laws* 10). Conversely, whatever moves by itself has soul. But it is not fitting that these souls that move by themselves should be dissolved. They are thus everlasting, in assimilation and approximation to what is eternally immutable. This accounts for the regularity and immutability of the order of the stars and planets who (*sic*!) move in circular motions through the ordered world, the *kosmos*; they are the everlasting gods (*Timaeus*). Human souls, on the other hand, have bodies of an inferior kind. When these bodies cease to function, the souls return to where they came from. There, different fates await different souls; ultimately, what fate one's soul has, here and elsewhere, depends on what one does and what one chooses to do (*Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Republic* 10, *Phaedrus*, *Laws* 10). That we know

anything at all, however, while our souls are here in these inferior, perishable bodies, is due to our remembering what we saw of the immutable, always identical forms of the good, the beautiful, etc., which our souls perceived before our life here, through their sharing in *nous*, and through their sharing the company of the blessed gods (*Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Republic* 10, *Phaedrus*). But this knowledge of ours is imperfect as our vision of the forms is interrupted; in this, we differ from the gods. We can only aspire to free ourselves as much as possible from any distractions offered by our physical senses of sight and hearing, etc., and by our appetites for food and all other physical pleasure (*Phaedo*, *Republic* 5). In that way, we can become like god as far as that is possible for man. And this, indeed, is the aim in life, *homoiōsis theō*(*i*), assimilation and approximation to god; this is not "becoming god," but it is for the soul to become like god as far as that is possible (*Republic* 10, *Theaetetus*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*, *Laws* 4), since the only way for the *body* to emulate immortality is through physical procreation, as in that way part of oneself lives on (*Symposium*). The god thus emulated by one's soul in fitting manner is the one characterized as all good and all-knowing. This entails that he cares for everything, and by implication everybody, and that he cannot be swayed by deception or flattery in the form of lies or prayers or sacrifices (*Euthyphro*, *Laws* 10).

Interpreting Plato's Theology

This picture of Plato's theology has much to recommend it. For those who have studied Plato, it has a certain familiarity. It is fairly coherent, and fairly consistent with what Plato says otherwise. It is fairly rational, or at least at once morally acceptable and rational enough to allow us to forgive Plato for having adhered to it. But, at the same time, it is misleading. And perhaps the single most important reason for this is that it is based on a rationalized literal reading of Plato. But we may not be entitled to read the dialogues in such a way. Closely connected with an understanding of a philosopher's philosophy is an understanding of his language. This is especially relevant here since some of the philosophers most relevant to the study of ancient Greek theology, and Plato foremost among them, consciously developed their own terminology and moulded their language to convey their thought. A few reflections on language and literary form shall therefore precede the outline of Plato's philosophy needed for an understanding of his theology.

It may be best to begin with an analogy. In his book *The Universe in a Nutshell*, the sequel to *A Brief History of Time*, Stephen Hawking, the distinguished physicist who holds the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics at Cambridge, states: "the reason general relativity broke down near the beginning of the big bang is that it did not incorporate the uncertainty principle, the random element of quantum theory that Einstein had objected to on the grounds that God does not play dice. However, all the evidence is that God is quite a gambler. One can think of the universe as being like a giant casino, with dice being rolled or wheels being spun on every occasion" (Hawking 2001:79). From this, in conjunction with some other remarks scattered throughout the book, one could conclude that Hawking, like Einstein, believes in God. The only difference between the two physicists, one may think, is that, unlike Einstein, who thought that God does not play dice, Hawking thinks that God is a gambler; Hawking, though, is

unsure whether God gambles at dice or at roulette or, indeed, plays some other game that involves an element of chance. This latter uncertainty is expressed in the phrase "with dice being rolled *or* wheels being spun," and also with the word "like." In fact, the word "like" suggests that Hawking does not really think that the universe is a casino; he just compares the universe to a casino to make his belief in a gambling god more vivid. This interpretation would, of course, be quite mistaken. A reading of the book in its entirety makes it quite clear that *if* Hawking believes in God or a god, he has kept this belief out of his argumentation; moreover, the repeated, explicit statement that he is a positivist suggests that if he believed in God, that belief would be quite different from anything a traditionally believing Jew, Christian or Muslim would recognize as related to their theistic faith.

When Hawking speaks of God as a gambler, he is using an image. His language is characterized by comparison, metaphor, and allegory. In the clause "one can think of the universe as being like a giant casino," Hawking is talking about the universe. The comparison with the casino is made because universe and casino are alike in one respect, namely in respect of chance or randomness. In the clause "God is quite a gambler," one can take the phrase "being a gambler" as a metaphor for "admitting chance" and "God" as a metaphor for "the universe with its history and laws of physics." But it may be better to speak of allegorical usage, as the whole clause tells one story and invokes one image, and that story and image together stand for something quite different: the clause "God is quite a gambler" as a whole conveys the thought "the universe admits of chance" as a whole. In the philosophical use of allegory, it is often a single metaphor, for example "gamble" for "chance," that gives rise to more sustained allegories. The example also teaches another important feature of metaphor and allegory: they propagate. Einstein said that "God does not play dice," and he was of course not the first who used religious metaphor to illuminate and convey concepts of natural philosophy or physics; but whether Einstein himself did or did not believe in the god he speaks of, that he, Einstein, speaks of God is the reason why Hawking speaks of a gambling God. What Einstein actually believed, however, is irrelevant to the interpretation of what Hawking wants to express.

By using these and other metaphors and allegories, Hawking is situating himself and his book in the long tradition of Western thought and culture that stretches from the literature and philosophy of archaic Greece to cultural expressions in a diverse spectrum of media in the modern world. This example demonstrates that an author can use an array of well-established metaphors and images some of which serve the serious purpose of illustrating a specific point, while others are written in a playful tone that makes it much more difficult to determine their intention. But with neither type of metaphor is there any risk of losing the reader. Whatever the precise purpose of Hawking's allusions, if that purpose can be determined at all, there is no danger that anyone will misunderstand the text by attempting a literal interpretation of each and every detail.

Ancient myth and metaphor composed and written at the advanced stage of cultural development of the late fifth and early fourth centuries should be approached in the same way. Plato's project was similar to that of Hawking to the extent that he wanted to present an objective view of the world in which we live. His purpose was different, in that his starting point and his end point alike was the problem of how best to lead one's life in the light of this view of the world. His aim was to provide a

foundation for the objectively good life for human beings which would be able to defend itself and withstand all attack by argument. There were accordingly some things Plato could not rely on, including traditional, unreasoned notions of justice, piety, and decency. He could neither rely on the goodness of these characteristics and ways of the soul, nor could he rely on a common understanding of the terms in the first place. In his dialogues, he therefore steps back and looks for what is good in the first place.

This search for the good underlies the questioning of inherited values and inherited morality, *nomos*. Part and parcel of *nomos*, however, was inherited religion with its traditional gods. Indeed, one Greek word for "believing" is *nomizein*, i.e. "to go with what is handed down by *nomos*, custom." In the normal course of events, what is handed down by custom need not be analyzed or questioned. But in the climate of late fifth-century Sophistic debates, *nomos* was one of the most thoroughly questioned concepts. The opposition set up by the Sophists was that between custom and nature, *nomos* and *physis*. Socrates' questioning of common concepts portrayed in Plato's dialogues thus forms part of a wider trend which had called traditional beliefs and traditional belief into question. In particular, the anthropomorphic nature and the human behavior of the gods had already been criticized by the Presocratic philosophers, be it in jocular fashion, as in Xenophanes' humorous *reductio ad absurdum* of the belief in gods that look like men which culminates in his peculiar henotheism (D-K 21 B 11, 12, 14, 15, 23–6, 34), or be it in the serious abstract considerations of Heraclitus, who concludes that "the wise which is one thing alone does not want and does want the name of Zeus" (D-K 22 B 32).

Constructing Plato's Theology

While Socrates could draw on and is part of this critical tradition in Greek thought, the Socrates of Plato's dialogue is at the same time portrayed as religiously pious. But in assessing Socratic and Platonic piety, it should be taken into account that Plato not only had the pious task of defending the memory of his master: although trials for impiety were a sign of the unstable times of the Peloponnesian War rather than of the first half of the fourth century, Plato will have wanted to avoid all possibility of suffering the same fate as Socrates. The fact, therefore, that the Socrates of the Platonic dialogue is pious does not, as such, mean anything for an interpretation of Plato's theology. To learn about his theology, one must rather start from those arguments in the dialogues which do not form part of the dramatic setting or the portrayal of character.

One series of such arguments can be found in the *Euthyphro*, a threshold dialogue between the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*, in which Socrates, who has been accused by Meletus of introducing new gods and corrupting the young, a charge which will result in Socrates' condemnation, is in conversation with a man of religion, Euthyphro. Socrates poses the Greek question "What is the pious and what is the impious?" (5). In this question, the definite article "the" in front of the neuter singular adjective "pious" indicates and sums up what Euthyphro and Socrates both believe and had previously agreed on, that what is pious itself underlies all actions that can be called pious, and that it does not change over time or according to circumstances. Socrates'

question is one concerning human behavior, and insofar as Socrates and Euthyphro talk about gods, it is within those "ethical" parameters. Nevertheless, something can be said about Socrates' conception of these gods of tradition. Unlike Euthyphro, who seems to accept wholesale the gods of mythology, i.e. the gods of poetry, and whose theological considerations coexist with the tradition he has inherited, Socrates seems uncomfortable with the notion of gods quarrelling and feuding. And, unlike Euthyphro, Socrates is presented as being puzzled by the practice of sacrifice, if not prayer. Prayer, says Socrates, can be understood as our asking for something from the gods; but sacrifice, our giving of something to the gods, does not make sense as either a tending to the gods, *therapeia*, as one would tend domesticated animals, or as a serving of the gods, *hypēresia*, as a slave would serve his master: for what could we give to the gods that would be useful, *chrēsimon*, to them? The question is left unanswered and the dialogue moves in a different direction. The reader is therefore left with the last point Socrates and Euthyphro genuinely seemed to agree on; this is that piety is a certain form of justice, that part of justice that pertains to a human being's dealing with the gods (12). But making piety a part of the interpersonal virtue of justice allows for an unexpected inference, not actually made explicit by Plato: if piety is a form of justice, and if that which had been agreed for piety is also true for justice, namely that it is always the same, regardless of the passage of time and regardless of circumstances, then the same rules and standards apply in man's dealings with the gods as in man's dealings with his fellow men. There is no fundamental distinction between dealing with men and dealing with the gods. This result will have repercussions, notably in the *Republic*.

In the *Euthyphro*, in which a hexameter couplet is quoted that refers to Zeus as having created everything (12), the notion of the gods as perfect and in need of nothing is thus mooted for the first time. But Socrates and Euthyphro do not on grounds of principle dispute that – as a gesture of gratitude – sacrifice may be dear, *philon*, to the gods, even if it is not useful, *chrēsimon* (15). This question is also pursued in the *Lysis*, a dialogue between Socrates and the two youths Lysis and Menexenos, which has as its subject "what is dear," *philon*. While this dialogue is aporetic (i.e. ending with questions unresolved) so far as the relationship between what is dear and what is useful is concerned, it raises a number of interesting questions concerning the divine. In the context of reciprocity as a necessary condition of friendship, Socrates wonders jocularly if somebody devoted to the breeding and riding of horses, a horse-lover, *phil(h)ippos*, will be loved in turn by the horse, a wine-lover, *philoinos*, by the wine, and a wisdom-lover, *philosophos*, by wisdom, *sophia* (212). This, of course, is a Sophistic argument, exploiting the syntax of the Greek adjective *philos*, dear. But it opens up an interesting possibility once one assumes a highest wisdom that transcends human approximations to wisdom, and once this highest wisdom, which is equivalent to real knowledge of everything, is attributed to the gods. And this very step is taken in the *Lysis*, in which it is suggested that for a human being to be good is to be wise, i.e. to know whatever there is to know, and that those who are not completely stupid and ignorant and bad are striving to be good and are striving to know. That is to say, while they are not in possession of wisdom, they love wisdom and are thus wisdom-lovers, *philosophoi*; by contrast, those who already have knowledge no longer strive for wisdom; they are wise, *sophoi*, not wisdom-loving, *philosophoi*, be they gods or men (218). This is significant because the

remainder of the dialogue suggests that no human being has actually achieved this wisdom; by elimination, it is therefore only the gods who could qualify as perfectly knowledgeable and wise.

But this inference, which may be drawn from the *Lysis*, has the form of a theoretical postulate. As in the *Euthyphro*, Socrates' starting point and end point is the human being in its imperfection. It is the human goal that is named as the good, and, coupled with a recognition that nobody can actually attain this end completely, this perfection is attributed to the gods. But even so, the end for the human being has not changed. It still is becoming good through knowledge of what is good.

The *Lysis*, however, goes further than this in providing a rational picture of the position of man in the world. Discussion of the good as what is aimed for leads to a positing of three classes of things in the world as good, bad, or neither-good-nor-bad (216). In this scheme of things the neither-good-nor-bad is interpreted as being somewhat good, but not perfectly so, and in this respect bad, rather than being neither-good-nor-bad by being indifferent and not in any way good nor in any way bad. It is the neither-good-nor-bad that desires and therefore and thereby loves the good. As a principle, this can apply to many things in many contexts; but in the context of friendship, a logical consequence would be that a *philosophos*, someone not entirely ignorant but not perfect, loves a *sophos*, someone perfectly wise. But as no human being is perfectly wise, it should be the gods, who are wise, that are loved; and as very few human beings are absolutely ignorant, almost everybody qualifies to fulfill this definition of *philosophos*. Read in this way, the *Lysis* could contain the kernel of Plato's theory of motivation and at the same time of his theology. But the dialogue itself does not exploit this possibility. Instead, Socrates, having mentioned the gods (218), reverts to speaking of liking and loving "the good." Despite the aporetic ending and despite the apparent logical puzzles (which led Aristotle to develop a perverse theory of friendship and love of god in *Eudemian Ethics* 7 and *Nicomachean Ethics* 8–9), the reader of the *Lysis* is left with the impression that indeed only good people can be friends with each other, that no one loves the bad, not even the bad himself. This corresponds with the view of friendship advocated in the *Phaedrus* (255), a dialogue in which those souls that are capable of it spend time in close association with the gods (247). In the *Lysis*, though, this notion of the good's being friends only with the good is intimately connected with the stability and immutability of the good (214). In this way, the proverbial "friendship of similar with similar" has been more closely defined as "friendship of good with good"; but the notion of friendship with what is similar to oneself and in that respect akin has not been abandoned completely. At the same time a gap is felt between the neither-good-nor-bad striving for the good and the good striven for. The neither-good-nor-bad is constantly striving to close the gap by becoming better. And while this predicament is not expressed in the *Lysis* in so many words, the human being who is neither-good-nor-bad, by virtue of being *philosophos*, is indeed trying to become as similar as possible to the good: in that sense, the ideal of assimilation to god (which we have encountered at *Republic* 10, 613, *Theaetetus* 172–7, *Phaedrus* 252–3, *Timaeus* 89–90; *Laws* 4, 716) is prefigured in the *Lysis*. But at the same time the good is said to be the beautiful (216). The beautiful itself, however, is the highest goal of human striving and cognition in the *Symposium* just as the good itself is the goal of everything and at the root

of everything in the *Republic*. One can thus see already, on the basis of the early and middle dialogues, why later generations would want to equate the good itself with god, and with the demiurge, the divine craftsman, of the *Timaeus*.

The *Lysis* makes a further methodological and ontological point in connection with its topic, "what is dear" (218–20). The point is methodological and epistemological to the extent that it pertains to a method of investigation and definition. In determining what is dear, Socrates suggests that what is dear is so *because of* something and *for the sake of* something: for example medical science is dear to the patient because of his illness and for the sake of his health. But that for the sake of which something is dear, here health, is also itself dear. If it is dear, is it dear for the sake of something? With any such regress, where one is led from one question to another, there must be a point at which one arrives at a firm ground, a starting point and beginning, *archē*. Stated thus apodictically, this looks like an arbitrary demand; but one can supply the implicit condition: one must arrive at a beginning "if there is to be any explanatory power in the process at all." Read this way, the statement loses its arbitrariness and instead just distinguishes fruitful search and explanation from an asking that is pointless because it is endless.

The point is ontological because this thing which turns out to be a first beginning, which is designated as the first dear (thing), *prōton philon*, has in each case a concrete reality. It is that "at which all the others end" as their metaphorical point of arrival and completion (220). In this context, Socrates speaks of "us," by which must be meant all human beings, as being "in between," *metaxy*, good and bad. This notion of *metaxy* is also encountered in the *Symposium*. The *Symposium* is a dialogue containing a series of speeches in praise of the god Eros. When it is Socrates' turn to talk about the god (199–212), he startles his audience by claiming that Eros is not all-beautiful, all-knowing, all-powerful. Here the interjection of one of the interlocutors is that Socrates cannot possibly mean that Eros is ugly and bad. "Indeed not," replies Socrates, and he reports that when he was young he was taught by a priestess that not all that is not beautiful is ugly, just as not all that is not wise is stupid, but that there is something in between, *metaxy*, between ignorance and wisdom or knowledge is correct opinion without argument and proof. In that way, Eros is desiring the beautiful and good as being in between what is beautiful and good and, on the other hand, what is ugly and bad. But how can a god like Eros be anything but beautiful and good and wise? To that the answer is that Eros is not a god but a great and powerful *daimōn*. In Homer, *daimōn* is often a synonym for *theos*, god. But at Hesiod *Works and Days* 122 *daimones* is the designation for the golden race of men once this race died: "they, now, are *daimones* because of the will of great Zeus, noble, earth-bound, guardians of mortal men, giving riches: and that they hold as their kingly prerogative." Whether Hesiod knew that etymologically *daimōn* is "distributor" is irrelevant; Plato hardly did. Nor is it important whether Hesiod is the originator of a particular belief in *daimones*, or whether Plato was influenced in his choice of the word by Hesiod. Already at *Apology* 27 the word *daimones* is defined as either referring to gods or to children of gods; in the myth at the end of the *Phaedo*, each soul has a *daimōn* allocated to it to guide it through the underworld (107, 108, 113): when Plato introduces the term *daimōn* for Eros at *Symposium* 202, he provides it with a new definition: what is *daimonion*, of the sort of a *daimōn*, is in between, *metaxy*, god and mortal.

This immediately raises a number of questions within the context of Plato's dialogues: *daimonion* was the voice which Socrates habitually heard telling him when not to do something (*Apology* 40, *Euthyphro* 3); it is thus something intimately linked with the soul, whether it be interpreted as a forerunner of the concept of conscience or as a nervous, hallucinatory hypersensitivity on Socrates' part. Eros in the *Symposium*, on the other hand, as between ugly and beautiful, between ignorant and wise, is the desire for the beautiful and for wisdom. Eros the *daimōn* is the great philosopher. But this is just an image for the striving for the beautiful and for knowledge on the part of the philosophical (i.e. the thinking) human being that has already been seen in the *Lysis*. The desire of Eros is an allegory of the human soul. (One is reminded of Democritus' saying that "the soul is the dwelling place of the *daimōn*," D-K 68 B 171.) And Eros' position between god and mortal in that way stands for the position of the soul in between ignorance, which is connected with what is mortal, changing, and perishable, and knowledge, which is stable, unchanging, and in that sense divine (208): the culmination of the ascent described by the priestess and recounted by Socrates is the vision of "the beautiful itself by itself with itself, always being of one form" (211). The *daimōn* Eros is thus introduced to illuminate the conceptually difficult position of the human soul as somehow being part of the perishable human being, but somehow sharing in what does not change, just as in the *Phaedo* the human soul was said to be more similar, *homoioteron*, to what is always the same as itself and unchanging than to what changes, what comes to be and perishes (79–80). Here too the notion of assimilation to the unchanging is in the background, but here too it is not literally a god to whom one's soul assimilates itself. While Eros the great *daimōn* in the *Symposium* gave rise to literal interpretation, not least in the demonology of late antiquity, he should thus better be understood as one of the images Plato uses in describing aspects of human psychology which are difficult or impossible to convey without recourse to imagery at any time and in the context of any philosophy.

The importance of the *Lysis* as the starting point of much of Plato's ontology, cosmology, and theology does not end here. The dialogue introduces two more concepts which became influential in the history of metaphysics and theology alike. The first of these is found in the passage just discussed in connection with the *metaxy* (218–20). Taking the example of the patient whose disease is curable and who loves the science of medicine because of his illness and for the sake of health, Socrates explains that the neither-good-nor-bad loves the good and dear because of the bad and inimical, for the sake of something good and dear. Because of the identical description of the object of love and that for the sake of which that object is loved, an infinite regress looms. If there were such an infinite regress, we would be bound to give up, i.e., we would not be able to finish the investigation. The alternative is that we reach a beginning, *archē* (219). *Archē* had been the word for the ultimate physical constituent of the world since Anaximander, the first Presocratic philosopher of whom any word has survived. Subsequently, *archē* became the object of research for virtually all the Presocratics in Aristotle's accounts of early philosophy. In the *Lysis*, Plato is adopting this term and applying it to something which is in principle non-physical, the object of desire. But he does more than change the nature of what *archē*, beginning, is. Once he has equated *archē* with something desired by a human being, regardless of the physical or ontological status of that object of desire, he points out

that, in terms of a hierarchy of things loved and desired, all else that is dear to and loved by us *ends* in this first thing which really and truly is dear to and loved by us, while all else that is loved for the sake of something else is "dear and loved" just in name, as a pale shadow or reflection of this first good. The word for "ends" employed here contains the root of the noun *telos*, "end."

All mental activity, which for Socrates is always directed towards the good, thus aims at an end. An explanation of the world in terms of this aiming for and at an end, and directing one's actions accordingly, is sometimes referred to as "teleology." Plato is usually read as demanding a teleological explanation of the world instead of a mechanistic one at *Phaedo* 95–107, and to have attempted answers in those terms both in the myth of the *Phaedo* and in the *Timaeus* as a whole; in both cases, something super-human is involved, be it an immortal soul or a divine craftsman. But the origin of the notion of *telos* or end is found in the purely anthropocentric explanation of loving and liking in the *Lysis*. This, again, opens up the possibility for an interpretation of the later dialogues as metaphorically extending and transferring human psychology to a different plane, for purposes which may be wholly internal to these later dialogues.

In the *Lysis*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Timaeus*, the noun *telos*, end, is not employed in a teleological setting; we do find it, however, in the appropriate sense at *Symposium* 210–11, in a context which is exactly parallel to the one in the *Lysis*. In the *Symposium*, suddenly seeing and grasping the beautiful itself, for the sake of which one has pursued all the many beautiful things, is described as having reached it as a *telos*, an end. This usage has repercussions far beyond Plato. In an ethical sense, it underlies the rival theories of action and motivation of the various philosophical schools of antiquity as to the question of the highest good. But it would be wrong to divorce this ethical sense from the teleological ontological explanations of nature and the world. These include Aristotle's explanation of physical movement, which he links with the movements of the heavenly bodies. The heavenly bodies in turn, for Aristotle, form part of his theory of the highest god, the unmoved mover for the sake of whom all else moves; he moves as being loved and desired (*Metaphysics* Λ 7–10). The same thought underlies later Neoplatonic teleological theology: in his book on Platonic theology (2.59.16), Proclus, like Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*, uses the phraseology of Plato's *Lysis*.

The decisive link which allows us to see the *Lysis* as at the root of both teleology of nature and teleology of action(s), and which therefore opens up the possibility of reading Plato's theology as an allegory for human ethics, has sometimes been overlooked. It constitutes the last of the concepts introduced in the *Lysis* which are of interest in this context, and indeed of interest for a fuller understanding of Plato's philosophy as a whole. It is the dual notion of cause-and-reason and explanation, *aition* and *aitia*. In the *Lysis*, the word *aition* had appeared once at the beginning of the discussion in the context of a reason and explanation for certain laws and prescriptions in human life, reminding the reader that adjective and noun had a widespread application in Attic law as "responsible" and "the one responsible," "culpable" and "culprit" (209). It then recurs five times in quick succession at 221c–d. The context is a thought experiment by Socrates: if the neither-good-nor-bad loves and likes the good for the sake of the good and because of the bad, what if the bad disappeared? (Would we still love medicine if we were not ill? Perhaps. Would

we still love medicine if all disease and illness as such disappeared from the world? What would then be the function of medicine?) Would there be anything dear (to us) left if the bad disappeared? With needs based on deficiencies, this is something one may well ask; but there are also other desires, in themselves neither good nor bad, for the good. But as the effect disappears if the cause disappears, the bad cannot be the cause of these desires, if they continue to exist once the bad has disappeared. There must thus be another cause and explanation for liking and being liked, loving and being loved.

Where this argument is taken in the dialogue is not important here. The possibility it opens up, though, is this: by posing the question of what a world without the bad would look like, Plato lays the seed for an explanation of the cosmos in which what is bad is not cause of or reason for anything. If the bad is not, we would still do things for the sake of the good. This position is explicated at *Phaedo* 95–107. There, Plato does not speak of "the first dear thing" which is good and dear by itself and not for the sake of something else, but rather simply of the good itself and the beautiful itself. And the good itself and the beautiful itself are said to be cause-and-reason not only for our desiring what is good and what is beautiful, but for everything good and beautiful, all the good and beautiful things we see around us. Plato combines the notion of *aition*, a notion perhaps first introduced into natural philosophy by the atomist Democritus, whom Plato saw as a main opponent throughout his life, with that of *archē*, the beginning of everything that was the stuff of the Presocratics. Everything in this world of becoming has a beginning, and everything has a cause: for Plato, beginning and cause are not water or fire or "the infinite," but the beautiful and the good.

This explanation is stated in more or less this form in the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium*, and the *Republic*, and rephrased in the *Timaeus* as the conviction that order is more beautiful and better than disorder. But while this explanation may satisfy the mind, it does not satisfy popular imagination and belief. Any explanation of the world which did not take account of the gods of tradition was in danger of being equated with the doctrine of Protagoras, who had claimed, about the gods, not to know whether they existed or not (D-K 80 B 4), or the doctrine attributed to Critias, that the gods were invented by clever people for political reasons (D-K 88 B 25), or those doctrines of others again who claimed that there were either no gods at all, or if there were gods, they did not care for us. Already in the *Republic* Plato therefore deals with the role of traditional, popular mythology and poetry in society (*Republic* 2–3, esp. 377–83). Socrates declares that, in the city he envisages, stories about gods must present them as not causing harm, not doing anything bad, not being the cause-and-reason, *aition*, of anything bad, but being good and beneficent, being the cause-and-reason of what is good only. In addition, god as good does not change his form, being perfectly self-sufficient and not in need of change (379–80), concepts prefigured in a non-theological context in the *Lysis*, where they were attributes of the perfectly good man.

This conception of god as good is then introduced into an explanation of the world at large. The link is the notion of *aition*, which is applied both to actions, decisions, responsibilities, and culpabilities of human beings and to natural science, since in the natural world of change too nothing happens without a cause. But while causality in the *Phaedo* does not go beyond positing the form of the good, the form of the beautiful, etc., and while the *Republic* (6.503–11) sees the form of the good as a

cause-and-reason beyond all else, the *Timaeus* reverts to the popular notion, already encountered in the *Euthyphro* (12), of the highest god as father of all. This is then explicated in the way outlined at the beginning of this chapter. But what Plato says about a creator god in *Republic* 10 and in the *Timaeus*, what he says in the *Phaedrus*, the *Politicus*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws* about soul and about god, all has the character of myth and allegory, designed to persuade. The starting point of explanation, throughout Plato's work, is the conviction that the world is, actually, good. Any explanation of the world must therefore not only explain the physical constitution of things, it must explain the good. But at the same time, the explanation must be such that it is acceptable to those whom Plato wants to be persuaded by his ethics otherwise. Myths about god are tales of persuasion.

Epilogue

Plato had created a purely rational theology. He never presented it in abstract form, and he never characterized it as a logical construct. Instead, the leading characters in the dialogues, Socrates, Timaeus, the Athenian guest in the *Laws*, are at pains to stress their own belief in the gods and the necessity of such a belief in any form of human society. This lack of disambiguation between rational enterprise and social necessity was a deliberate ploy on Plato's part that allowed him to resolve the difficulty that lay in a dual readership, an educated audience of upper-class Greeks without any special philosophical training, and a highly skilled group of logicians, mathematicians, astronomers, biologists, and legal experts in the Academy and related institutions. But this lack of disambiguation proved fatal. The philosophical schools of the Academy and the Lyceum propagated a derivative henotheistic doctrine; Aristotle in particular in *Metaphysics* Λ 7–10 presents an elaborate construct of a prime mover in an attempt to fulfill the demands of both logic and physics, failing on both counts. At the other end of the spectrum stood the pale reflection that was the Stoic *kosmos* with its divine, impersonal intelligence, a material god that had emanated out of the Platonic myth. Only the uncaring gods of Epicurus defy all the efforts of the Athenian guest in *Laws* 10. Plato's god, however, found his most fruitful reception, via Neoplatonism, in Christian theology: the Greek Church Fathers, Augustine (see especially *City of God*, Book 8), Boethius (see not least his *Consolation of Philosophy*). And, to jump from the beginning to the end of the Middle Ages, at least three of Aquinas' proofs of the existence of God, the cosmological, the causal, and the teleological, can trace their origins to the conception of god in Plato's dialogues.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

W.K.C. Guthrie's *History of Greek Philosophy* (Guthrie 1962–81) has held its place as a readable, wide-ranging, conservative introductory account of Greek philosophy. For a very short introduction to ancient philosophy, one may turn to Sedley 2003; useful tables and timelines, a glossary, and extensive bibliographies are among the many positive features of this collection of essays; amongst these Most 2003 offers a cursory overview of the themes, problems, and

proposed solutions in philosophical religion from the Presocratics to early Christianity. A good discussion of Presocratic theology is Broadie 1999. Still worth reading is the longer, more discursive account by Jaeger (1947), covering the same period. The material relevant to the study of the religion and theology of the Presocratics and Plato receives an excellent scholarly analysis in Burkert 1985:305–37, and 465–72. The philosopher's task of making himself similar to god as much as is humanly possible is taken seriously and discussed in its implications in Sedley 1999; the response by Mahoney 2005 does not necessarily mark progress. The recent collection of translations of some of Plato's most important myths by Partenie (2004) contains useful bibliographical references. Of the detailed treatments of Plato's theology, Solmsen 1942 deserves special mention. Gerson 1990 contains chapters on "The Presocratic Origins of Natural Theology," "Plato on God and the Forms," "Aristotle's God of Motion," "Stoic Materialist Theology," and "Plotinus on the God Beyond God"; it is a good example of an account that interprets the history of philosophy from its end. On the nature of the myth of the demiurge in Plato, the incisive article by Hackforth (1936) stands out. For the demiurge in Plato and potential precursors in earlier Greek philosophy, Classen (1962) is fundamental. Specialist treatments of "god in Plato's thought" are Menn 1995 and Carone 2005. On religious metaphor in Plato in general see Pender 2000. Herrmann 2003 examines metaphor in the ontology and ethics of the *Timaeus*, while Herrmann 2004 investigates Socrates' veiled agnosticism and Plato's distance from Orphico-Pythagorean beliefs, including the doctrine of recollection, from the *Apology* to the *Phaedo*. For an examination of the notion of cause in Plato see e.g. Strange 1999. The relevant chapters in Algra et al. (1999) offer a good starting point for theology in the hellenistic period. Chadwick 1966 and Stead 1994 are excellent introductions to the influence of the theology of Plato (and indeed other Greek and Roman philosophers) on early Christian thought. Mawson 2005 attempts a discussion of God in the three major modern monotheistic religions which does not make reference to Plato or indeed to Greek antiquity; but what is presented as a modern, quasi *a priori* account of belief in God could not even have been begun without the rational theology of Plato, as a glance at the book's Table of Contents will show.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Ceri Davies, Swansea, and Daniel Ogden sincere thanks for friendly advice and helpful criticism in matters of style and content. I should like to repay long-standing debts of gratitude by dedicating this essay to Prälat Dr. Peter Prassel, Bonn, and Dr. med. Johannes Chevalier, Mainz.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Greek Religion and Art

T.H. Carpenter

Our term "Greek art," with its demands of selectivity, is an old-fashioned and misleading term that should be permanently retired. What we have from the Greek world are remnants of the material culture – artifacts and monuments – some of which may be beautiful and some not, but all of which are valuable in helping us to understand the culture that flourished there. For the Greeks themselves, who had no word equivalent to our "art," all of these remains were the work of artisans – *technē* – and they all had a function within the society. Art for art's sake is not a concept that a Greek would have understood.

Among the artifacts and monuments that have come down to us many include images, sculpted and painted, and these images will be the focus of the discussion here. Figure-decorated vases, principally from Attica, are our richest source of images; more than 50,000 of them with images from myth and daily life have been cataloged from the sixth and fifth centuries BC. Many of these images are explicitly religious in that they show rituals or depict deities. Many others with no obvious religious content are on objects that had religious functions as offerings to gods (votives) or as elements of festivals or rituals. In every case, however, the object or monument on which an image appears had a function that is fundamental to an understanding of the image itself.

In looking at images there are two dangers to be avoided. One is to ignore the context (i.e. what sort of objects they appear on, what the objects were used for, where and when they were made, and where they were found), which leaves them floating in a kind of synchronic limbo as curiosities or abstractions that give us little sense of a connection with living, breathing people. The other danger is to think of them as photographs. Painters are always selective in their choice of what to include in an image. In scenes of daily life made by an Athenian for Athenians, the painter had no reason to include details that we might like to see but which his customers would have taken for granted.

In what follows here I have limited my discussion to Athens during the second half of the fifth century, when our sources are particularly rich. All the artifacts and

monuments discussed were made in Athens and the majority of them were found there as well. The central question I address is: what can the study of artifacts and monuments tell us about religion in Athens, particularly during the second half of the fifth century? I interpret the term "religion" here (another for which there is no Greek equivalent) as activity related to the worship of gods, with the understanding that a fundamental purpose of worship was to attract and maintain the gods' support through offerings – which could be sacrifices or appropriate objects (votives) dedicated to the deity. However, it will quickly become clear that in the world of fifth-century Athens, it is all but impossible to separate the "religious" from the artistic, economic, and political dimensions of life.

Images at the Panathenaea

I start with a clay vase called an amphora made in Athens around 430 BC on which is a depiction of two young men preparing to wrestle under the supervision of a judge (Figure 26.1). Unfortunately, the find-place for this particular piece is not known, but this fact is less important here because we know precisely what its function was in Athens, where it was originally used. The technique used to paint the scene is called black-figure, in which silhouette figures with details incised are set against a background of the reddish Attic clay. But that technique went out of fashion in Athens soon after 500 BC and was replaced by a technique called red-figure, where the figures are reserved, that is they are left in the reddish color of the clay, and the background is painted black around them. Thus at first sight our vase would have seemed "old-fashioned" at the time that it was made. However, the black-figure technique was preserved in Athens on into the second century BC for the sole purpose of painting amphoras like this one that were given as prizes to victorious athletes at the Panathenaea, a festival held in late July or early August in honor of Athena, and which every fourth year included athletic and musical competitions.

The distinctive shape and the imagery on the prize vases was fixed as early as 566 BC, the date when the contests were probably added to the festival, and they changed very little during the more than three hundred years during which they were made. On one side was a depiction of a contest, presumably the one for which the vase was awarded, and on the other was an image of the warrior goddess Athena, who strides forward, her shield on her left arm, her spear raised for attack in her right hand. (Figure 26.2) She wears an Attic helmet and her snake-fringed aegis over her *peplos*, and on our vase the device on her shield is a winged Victory (Nike) with a wreath in her hands. On either side of Athena are columns surmounted by cocks, and beside one of the columns is the inscription "a prize for the games at Athens." The retention of the old technique and the use of a consciously archaic style of drawing for the figure of Athena reflect the conservatism of religious customs and rituals. We will return to this image of Athena, which has a special place in Attic iconography, but first let us consider the use of the vase.

Many art museums in Europe and the United States proudly display Panathenaic amphoras as important works of Greek art, and recently a fifth-century example, much like ours, sold on the art market for more than half a million dollars. This is

Figure 26.1 Athletes preparing to wrestle in the presence of a judge on an Attic black-figure Panathenaic amphora. ca. 430 BC. Ny Carlsburg Museum, Copenhagen inv. 3606

Figure 26.2 Athena Promachos (reverse of fig. 26.1)

slightly ironic, because for the Greek athletes who won the vases the contents were undoubtedly as important as the container (if not more so). The amphoras were filled with olive oil that came from special olive trees owned by the state and said to be descendants of a sacred olive tree on the Acropolis that was a gift from Athena herself. Competitions were arranged by age group (boys, youths, and men) and according to an early fourth-century inscription, the winner of first prize in the youths' wrestling contest, as depicted on our vase, received not one, but fifty of them, while the youth in second place received ten (Neils 1992:15–16).

Our vase is 62.8 cm high and would have held something over 35 liters of oil, so the first prizewinner would have taken home close to 1,900 liters of oil. Based on another early fourth-century inscription, the value of the oil in one amphora can be calculated at about 12 drachmas, which means the youth who won the wrestling event received oil worth 600 drachmas (Vos 1981:42). Since a skilled laborer earned about 1 drachma per day, the youth's winnings were not an insubstantial sum – almost two years' wages. As many as 1,400 amphorae were awarded at the festival every four years, so there was also a clear economic benefit for the potters who received the state contracts to make the vases. Thus we can see economic, political, artistic, and religious strands woven together to form part of the fabric of the festival.

That the prize vases for the games in honor of Athena should be manufactured by Athenian potters was appropriate on more than economic and political grounds. One of Athena's roles was as patron of potters (and other artisans); on an Attic red-figure vase from the middle of the fifth century, Athena and Nike themselves appear in a workshop to crown the artisans who are crafting vases (Boardman 1975: fig. 323). Athena was thought to have taught the crafts to the Athenians as well as being their patron, and there was an Attic festival in the late fall that honored Athena Ergane (goddess of labor) and Hephaestus, the smith god. It was at this festival, nine months before the Panathenaea, that a loom was set up and women began to weave a *peplos*, a garment that would dress the most sacred cult statue of Athena on the Acropolis, Athena Polias (Guardian of the City).

In fact, a central event of the Panathenaic festival each year was a procession that accompanied the newly woven *peplos* to the ancient statue on the Acropolis. Organized by a board of ten men appointed for a four-year term to oversee the preparations for the festival, the procession itself was what might today be called "performance art." The various elements of the Athenian population, and even some non-Athenians, were chosen to participate in what must have been a colorful and elegant event. The choice of who would participate was carefully made on the basis of aesthetics as well as status; Xenophon (*Symposium* 4.17) tells us that even the old men who marched were chosen for their beauty. The procession ended on the Acropolis with the presentation of the *peplos* followed by the sacrifice, one by one, of a hundred heifers at the great altar of Athena Polias that dated back at least to the seventh century and probably earlier. The meat was then distributed to the Athenians gathered below in the agora. Sacrifices were probably the only occasions when most Greeks consumed meat.

Needless to say, none of the *peploi* woven for the cult statue has survived; however, literary sources tell us that the same subject, the battle between the gods and the giants called the Gigantomachy, was woven into the *peplos* every year. This

battle, the last challenge to the authority of the Olympians, held particular significance for the Athenians as we shall see, and it is likely that a principal purpose of the Panathenaic festival itself, at least in the fifth century, was to thank Athena for her central role in the defeat of the giants, and thus to encourage her continued support.

Our knowledge of the Gigantomachy comes largely from images since the earliest surviving narrative account of it is in a first- or second-century AD summary (Apollodorus, *Library* 1.6.1–2), but even in the fifth century BC images were an important means of transmitting the story. There are few references to the Gigantomachy in fifth-century literature; neither Aeschylus nor Sophocles mentions it in extant works, and Euripides and Aristophanes mention it only in passing, mainly as it relates to the *peplos*. On the other hand, there is a substantial body of Attic images depicting the battle from both the sixth and fifth centuries on vases and in sculpture. Though depictions of the battle occasionally appear in images from other places, the Gigantomachy clearly had special meaning for the Athenians.

From before the middle of the sixth century large black-figure vases were dedicated on the Acropolis with depictions of the many gods in combat with the giants. Then, during the fifth century, on red-figure vases, duels between a god and a giant were more often shown, though the depictions of the gods usually followed the conventions established on earlier vases. The Athena who appears in these scenes is almost always precisely the Athena who appears on the Panathenaic amphoras, called Promachos (Champion). This is the Athena who fights a giant on the remains of the pediment from an archaic temple on the Acropolis, and it is the Athena of small fifth-century bronze votive statuette found on the Acropolis (Figure 26.3). This, in all likelihood, is the way Athena appeared on the *peplos*.

The cult statue of Athena Polias, which was dressed each year in the new *peplos*, was very ancient. We have no reliable description of it; however, we know it was made of olive wood, was probably no larger than life-size, and was only vaguely anthropomorphic. In any case, the statue was small enough for the Athenians to carry it with them when they fled the invading Persians in 480 BC. Pausanias (1.26.6) was told that it fell from heaven; thus it was not seen to be the work of a mortal artisan, and in that way it stands in sharp contrast to the more famous image of Athena, Pheidias' huge gold and ivory Athena Parthenos, dedicated in 438 BC, less than a decade before our Panathenaic amphora was made.

Before turning to Pheidias' statue we need to set the stage. In 480 BC and again in 479 BC the invading Persians sacked the Acropolis, the religious center of Athens. They destroyed the temples including an earlier "Parthenon" that was under construction, a thank-offering to Athena for defeat of the Persians at Marathon in 490 BC. In addition, they smashed or looted thousands of votive offerings, large and small. Before the battle at Plataia, where the Persians were finally defeated, the Greeks are said to have sworn an oath that they would not rebuild the temples destroyed by the Persians but would leave the ruins as memorials to the impiety of the barbarians (Diodorus Siculus 11.29.3) The cult statue of Athena Polias was returned to the Acropolis, probably to a makeshift building, but the site as a whole does seem to have remained desolate for thirty years until the Athenian statesman Pericles convinced the Assembly to fund a building program that would be commensurate with the newfound greatness of the city. Construction of the Parthenon, the great temple that

Figure 26.3 Bronze statuette of Athena Promachos dedicated by Meleso from the Acropolis in Athens. ca. 480 BC. National Museum, Athens inv. 6447. DAI Neg. NM 4742

would house the statue of Athena Parthenos, was started in 447 BC. The statue was dedicated in 438 BC, and the last of the architectural sculpture on the outside of the building was probably finished by 432 BC.

The Parthenon surely stands as the epitome of Greek temple architecture, but there is a certain irony to that. There was never a cult associated with the temple. As far as

we know, there was no priestess of Athena Parthenos and there was no altar in front of it where sacrifices could be performed as there normally is with a temple. Rather, the Parthenon was itself an extravagant votive offering to Athena. Unlike most temples, it had two rooms instead of one. The larger east room was purpose-built to house Pheidias' statue of Athena, and the west room served as a treasury where the wealth of the Athenians was stored. As one scholar has recently written of it, "the Parthenon should perhaps be considered not so much as a temple of Athena as a temple to Athens, a storehouse of its wealth, a marble essay on its greatness" (Hurwit 1999:27).The ancient olive-wood statue continued to be the sacred image of Athena on the Acropolis, though it was probably still housed in a makeshift setting when the Parthenon was finished. Eventually it was moved to the Erechtheum, a temple completed nearly three decades later.

Athena Parthenos was an extravagant showpiece, some 30 feet tall, made of plates of ivory and gold attached to a wood formwork, the gold alone weighing nearly 2,500 pounds (Leipen 1971:19; Figure 26.4). Thus, in the latter part of the fifth century we see an illustration of a notable disjunction between, on the one hand, religious significance and, on the other, physical grandeur or what we might call artistic merit. To see the giant statue shimmering with the light that came in through the door and two windows in the east wall would have been a moving experience, yet the message had more to do with pride and wealth and power than it did with religion in the strict sense.

The Parthenon was richly decorated with sculpture. Freestanding figures filled the triangular pediments at either end of the building. Ninety-two rectangular panels (metopes) in high relief, separated one from the next by grooved panels called triglyphs, went all the way around the building beneath the eves, and a continuous frieze carved in low relief went around the outside of the inner rooms (cella). Not surprisingly, much of the imagery associated with the Parthenon echoes themes from the Panathenaic festival.

Had you participated in the Panathenaic procession in 430 BC, the year our amphora was probably awarded, you would have entered the Acropolis through the new monumental gateway, the Propylaia (Figure 26.5). As you emerged, you would have seen the west pediment of the Parthenon rising up in front of you, with Athena and Poseidon in a moment of tense conflict. Between them was an olive tree, Athena's gift that won her the patronage of Athens over Poseidon's gift of a salt spring. That tree, of course, was the one that was the ancestor of those that produced the oil to fill the prize amphorae.

As you passed by the north side of the building on your way to the great altar where the sacrifice of a hundred heifers would take place, you would have caught glimpses, between the columns, of a procession of horsemen and youths and elders on foot and even of animals that echoed the very procession of which you were a part. In fact, the frieze of more than 524 feet that went around the cella of the building depicted the Panathenaic procession, moving down the long north and south sides toward the assembled gods on the east end, where a man and a child fold the *peplos* for Athena.

Later, had you gone to visit the spectacular new statue by Pheidias, you would have approached the east end of the building. Facing you was a pediment depicting the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus in the presence of many deities. Below the frieze were fourteen metopes, in each one of which a deity fought a giant or giants. As

Figure 26.4 Reconstruction of the Athena Parthenos in Nashville, Tennessee. Photo courtesy of Photographic Services of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville

you moved into the porch you would see on the east frieze the assembled deities and on either side of them mortals with the *peplos.* Then, inside the cella, you would have seen the huge gold and ivory statue, of armed Athena at rest. In one hand she held a

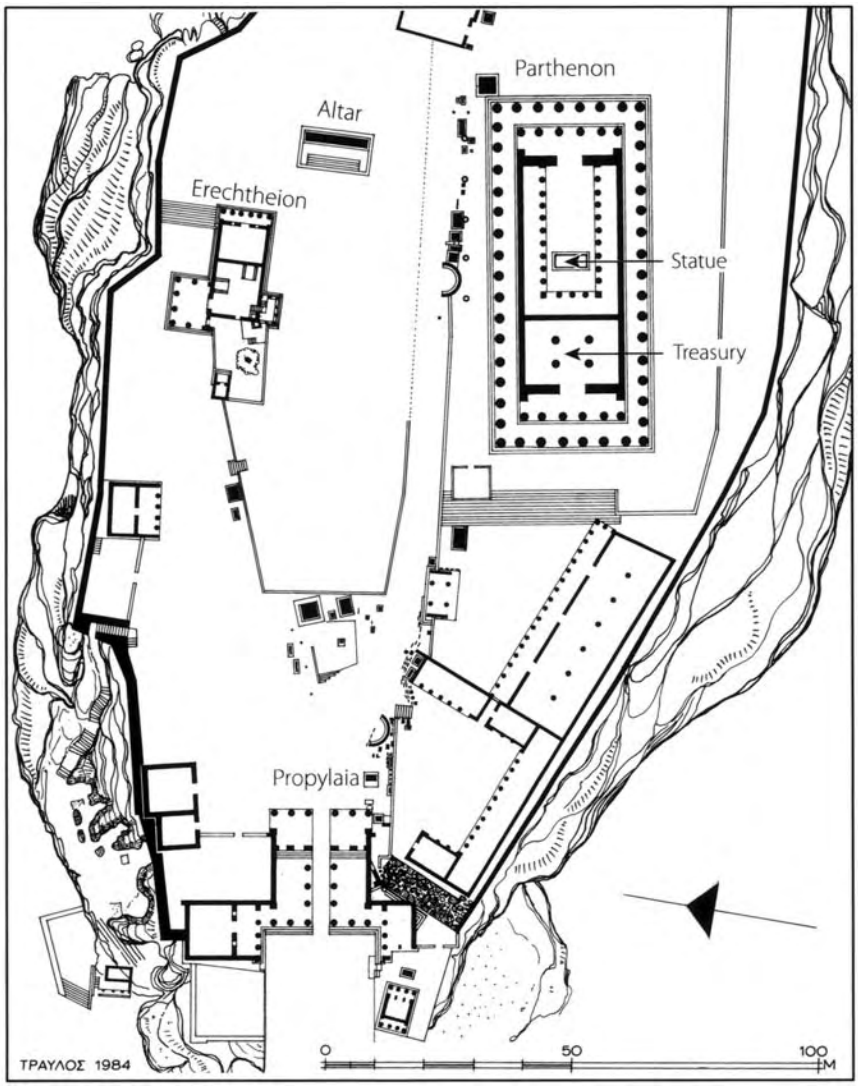

Figure 26.5 Plan of the Acropolis showing the Propylaia, the great altar, the Parthenon, and the Erechtheum. After Travlos 1988:37, fig. 33

Nike and with the other she supported her shield on the inside of which was a depiction of the Gigantomachy.

The depictions of the gods at battle in the metopes are of particular interest because they give monumental form to images we know otherwise only from vases. Their prominence on the east end of the temple is an indication of their perceived importance. It seems clear that the Gigantomachy had meaning for Athenians that was much broader and deeper than just a mythic fight. More likely it was a kind of visual metaphor the terms of which could change over time. The treatment of Apollo helps to illustrate this point.

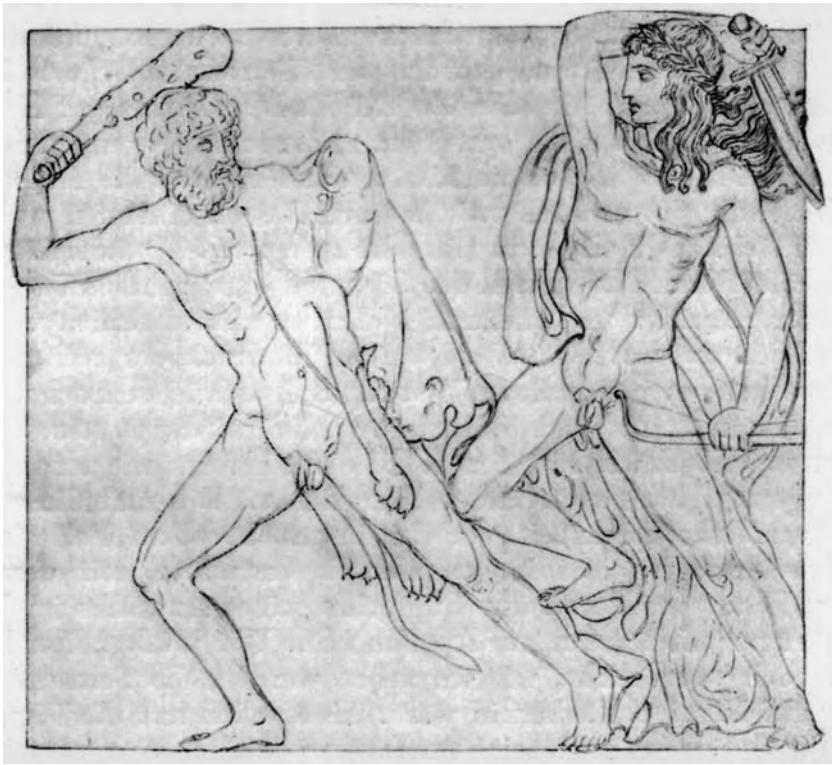

Figure 26.6 Reconstruction of east metope 9 from the Parthenon showing Apollo with a sword fighting a giant. After Praschniker 1928: fig. 126

In early depictions of the Gigantomachy, Apollo fights alongside his sister Artemis, and they both use their bows, which are their traditional attribute. Then, about 500 BC, Apollo, now by himself, is suddenly shown fighting giants with a sword, as he does on the Parthenon metope, and this becomes the new convention for him; however, his use of the sword is strictly limited to fights with giants (Figure 26.6). For all other scenes the bow continues to be his most common attribute. A sudden and dramatic change in a time-honored convention such as this must have conveyed a specific meaning to Athenians and it was not by chance that the distinctive sword-swinging pose was used in 477 BC by the sculptors Kritios and Nesiotes for their famous statue of the tyrant slayer Harmodios, which stood in the agora. We can only guess at what that meaning might have been in 500 BC and in 477 BC, but we should also recognize that in 430 BC, a generation later, it may have held different meaning. When religion lacks texts to maintain orthodoxy, images can transmit traditions from generation to generation, but the meaning transmitted by such images does not necessarily remain the same over time. A generation separating images is not a statement of proximity but of distance.

To return to the Panathenaea, the most basic purpose of any festival was to thank the deity for past favors and to encourage the deity's continued benevolence toward the city. For the Panathenaea that benevolence applies to those who tend the olive

groves, to potters, to painters, and to women who weave, all of whom look to Athena as their patron. Ultimately, with the Parthenon, the celebration of her triumph becomes a metaphor for the triumph of the city itself with its military, economic, and political implications.

Athenian Representations of Religious Practice

A fragment of an amphora of Panathenaic shape from about 500 BC found on the Acropolis, where it was surely a dedication, allows us to shift our focus from the ways the Greeks used the images to what images can tell us about Greek religious practices (Van Straten 1995: fig. 18). Though the shape is Panathenaic, the imagery on it is unique, and it clearly was not a prize amphora. Two men followed by a third move to the right with a goat on a leash. Other fragments show that they were part of a larger procession of men. The lead man has a large amphora on his shoulder, also of Panathenaic shape. A sacrifice is in the offing; the goat could have no other purpose. The scene has been interpreted as a victor at the Panathenaic games 'on his way to the Acropolis to sacrifice a goat as a thank-offering, and to dedicate part of his prize as a tithe to the goddess' (Van Straten 1995:25). This is a reminder that individuals, as well as cities, could make thank-offerings to gods in hope of continued benevolence. In fact, the Acropolis would have been covered with thousands of offerings of every conceivable type. An inscription on the base of the bronze figurine of Athena Promachos from the Acropolis mentioned earlier, which would have stood on a small column, tells us that it was dedicated to Athena by Meleso as a tithe. Another fragment of a pot from the Acropolis, this one a red-figure krater, was clearly a dedication from a potter (Figure 26.7). On it, in an upper band, are artisans at work on vases in a pottery workshop, while below youths lead a sheep or a ram to the right. Again, a sacrifice is in the offing. Each object was dedicated to a deity for a specific purpose with the hope of a reasonable return. We must remember that Greek religion was not about love or warm feelings for a deity; rather, it was about a relationship between unequals where a mortal hopes for some sort of reciprocity for his or her offerings to the immensely more powerful god.

Sacrifice was the central act of Greek religion, but unlike a vase or a statue dedicated to a deity, a sacrifice was an ephemeral gift; once it was over there was no evidence that it had happened. The more than 150 Attic black-figure and red-figure vases that have depictions on them that relate to sacrifices are a rich source of information about the ritual that accompanied this central rite. But why is sacrifice a subject on these vases? Many fragments with sacrificial scenes on them have been found on the Acropolis, and it is possible that they were dedicated there as permanent reminders for forgetful gods of past sacrifices (Van Straten 1995:53). For others, particularly those found in Etruscan tombs, the motive is less clear.

The actual killing of the animal at the altar is seldom if ever shown on Greek vases (cf. Chapter 8). Rather, depictions of sacrifice focus on the procession and activities before the killing or the rituals after the fact. Most of the scenes are generalized so that it is only occasionally possible to know to which deity a sacrifice is being offered. A scene on a krater from about 430 BC found in a tomb in Greek Agrigento in Sicily in 1962, where it may have served as an ossuary, is of particular interest here because

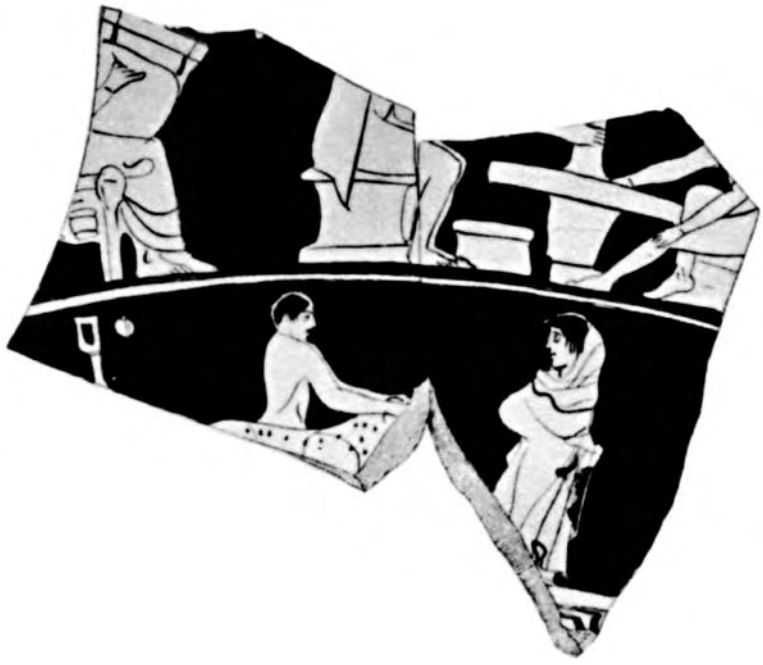

Figure 26.7 Potters in their workshop and youths leading an animal to sacrifice on a fragment of an Attic red-figure krater from the Acropolis. After Graef and Langlotz 1925–33: no. 739

it is one of the few scenes that include the god to whom the offering is being made along with the sacrificers (Figure 26.8). Four males prepare to sacrifice a he-goat at an altar in front of a temple in which the god Apollo, with a laurel branch, sits on a throne observing them. The temple is indicated by two doric columns and an architrave; a tripod on a doric column stands beside the altar. But before we look at the details of the sacrifice, a word should be said about the way painters and sculptors conceived of deities.

The conventions of archaic and classical Greek art were such that the human body, mortal or immortal, was almost always depicted as an ideal form. Thus, for painters and sculptors, context and attributes (clothing or accessories) were the only ways to distinguish gods from mortals. When looking at the face of Athena or Artemis or Apollo on a vase or a statue, one sees only an ideal face, but one sees the same ideal face when looking at a representation, as here, of a priest or an athlete or a hetaira or even a vase-painter. Lacking attributes or an inscription, it is often difficult to tell whether a god or a mortal is intended by the figure. For painters and sculptors, beauty or perfection of form was not unique to immortals and was certainly not a defining characteristic.

On the Agrigento vase, all of the figures are wreathed with what appear to be laurel wreaths, as they are in virtually all depictions of sacrifice. A youth to the right of the altar holds a sacrificial tray with three upright sprigs (*kanoun*) with his left hand. This tray is sometimes shown with three semi-circular handles, and from other depictions

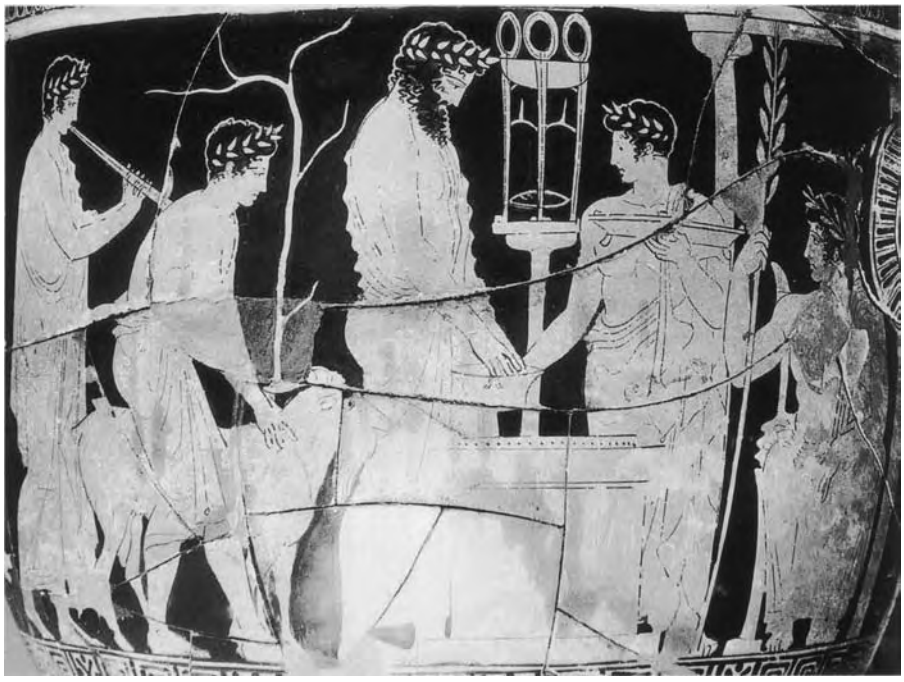

Figure 26.8 Preparation for the sacrifice of a goat in the presence of Apollo on an Attic red-figure krater from Agrigento ca. 430 BC. Agrigento 4688. Photograph: Museo Archeologico Regionale

we know that it holds the sacrificial knife as well as barley corn; later it can be used to hold the organs of the animal. With his right hand the youth holds out a metal vessel with concave sides (*chernips*) which holds water in which a bearded priest washes his hands at the beginning of the ritual. Behind the priest a youth steadies the goat; the priest will turn and sprinkle its head with water from the *chernips* so that it will, by nodding, give its assent to the sacrifice. To the far left a youth accompanies the ritual with the sound of his double pipes (*aulos*). All of the figures, including the god, wear *himatia* draped over the left shoulder.

A red-figure *stamnos* of about the same date found in a tomb at Etruscan Cervetri in central Italy illustrates well the aftermath of the killing (Figure 26.9). Four wreathed males stand at an altar as a Nike hovers above. Damage to the surface obscures what she holds, but it was probably a pitcher from which she poured a libation into the cup held by the bearded priest. The altar, which is streaked with blood from the sacrifice, has wood carefully stacked on it and a fire burning. On top of the wood is the tail of the sacrificed animal attached to part of the sacrum (*osphus*). The curling of the tail in the fire was considered an indication that the sacrifice was well received (Van Straten 1995:118–30; cf. Chapter 9). Two nude youths hold spits with meat attached. These are the *splanchna*, the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, and kidneys of the sacrificed animal. They are roasted over the fire and then consumed warm by those participating in the sacrifice. To the far right a youth plays his aulos to

Figure 26.9 Aftermath of a sacrifice with youths preparing to roast *splanchnaoptai* over a fire on an altar on an Attic-red figure stamnos from Cerveteri ca. 430 BC. London E 455. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

accompany the ritual. He wears a *phorbia*, a leather strap that holds the mouthpiece of the instrument to his lips.

The priest here raises his left hand in what is probably a gesture of prayer. A particularly clear representation of prayer appears on an Attic red-figure vase from before the middle of the fifth century found at Etruscan Nola in central Italy (Figure 26.10) There the blind Thracian king Phineus raises both his hands palms out, and the painter has written the word "gods" (*theoi*) as if the word is coming out of his mouth.

Both of the vases with detailed representations of sacrifices on them discussed above were made in Athens, but one was found in a tomb in Greek Sicily, the other in an Etruscan tomb in central Italy. Both are of shapes designed for the *symposion*, a form of ritualized drinking common throughout the Greek and Etruscan worlds, where they would have held the mixed wine and water that was a central part of that ritual. Whether these vases were ever used for symposia or whether they were bought specifically for the tomb is impossible to say. In any case, the vases were export commodities, but the fact that the imagery is generally in keeping with imagery of sacrifice on fragmentary vases found in Athens can perhaps reassure us that it gives us some idea of the details of sacrificial rituals in Athens during the second half of the fifth century.

The care we must take in reading images on vases is illustrated well by a scene on another Attic red-figure krater, ca. 440 BC, found in a rich tomb at Spina, an Etruscan commercial center at the head of the Adriatic (Figure 26.11). A bearded

Figure 26.10 Phineus raising his hands in prayer as he addresses the gods on an Attic red-figure neck-amphora from Nola ca. 460. London E 291. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

male and a female holding offering bowls (*phialai*), presumably a god and a goddess, sit in a temple in front of which is an altar with a fire burning on it. A white-haired figure with a draped winnowing basket (*liknon*) on his or her head approaches from the right, followed by a woman playing pipes and another beating a *tympanon*.

Figure 26.11 Ecstatic worship in the presence of two deities on an Attic red-figure volute krater from Spina ca. 440 BC. Ferrara 2897. Photograph: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara

Behind the temple, with his back to it, is a professional aulete in a long, ornately decorated *chitōn* and a *phorbeia*. By him are two women dancing with snakes in their hands. The seated goddess wears a crown and holds a scepter with her left hand; a small lion stands on her outstretched arm. The god wears a fillet entwined with two snakes and holds a scepter. On the other side of the vase are more dancers, including a youth, with snakes and pipes and a *tympanon*.

What sense might fifth-century Athenians have made of this scene? Would they have seen it as a representation of something with which they were familiar or would they have understood it as an imaginary picture of what goes on in ecstatic cults (perhaps confirming preconceptions or prejudices), perhaps derived from a theatrical performance?

The scene is unique. Though every element of imagery in it appears on other Attic red-figure vases, they never appear in this combination, and there is disagreement amongst scholars as to who the deities are. The god has been variously called Dionysus, Sabazios, Dionysus Hades, and Dionysus Sabazios. The goddess has been called Ariadne, Semele, Kybele, and Demeter. In fact, Sabazios does not appear at all on any Greek vases and, aside from here, no other deity is shown with snakes in his hair. The lion standing on the arm of the goddess has parallels with Hera and with nymphs associated with Dionysus, and in sculpture the lion is associated with Kybele. The *liknon* as a sacrificial basket instead of a kanoun is later associated with Dionysus. The *tympanon*, which first appears on red-figure vases not long before this vase was made, is limited to Dionysiac scenes until the end of the century. Earlier in the century snakes were common attributes of nymphs who accompanied Dionysus. So there are Dionysiac associations, but the seated god has none of the attributes of Dionysus (*kantharos*, ivy wreath, *thyrsos*), one of the most common deities to appear on Attic red-figure vases. Had the vase-painter wanted us to see him as Dionysus he would have given us some indication. The presence of the professional musician is also puzzling, because he is usually associated with performances. In short, given the peculiarities of the scene we would be unwise to look at it as a document defining aspects of Attic religious practices. We would probably be closer to the mark if we saw it as a depiction of what the Attic painter thought "other people" did.

A group of Attic red-figure vases, mostly *stamnoi*, from the middle of the fifth century, which have been said to show mortal worship of Dionysus, should also be considered in this context. A *stamnos* from an Etruscan tomb at Falerii Veteres in central Italy illustrates well the basic elements of the scene (Figure 26.12). Two women flank a table on which two *stamnoi* stand on either side of a stack of cakes or bread. Behind the table is a column to which a bearded mask with an ivy wreath is attached. A cloak hangs down from the mask while ivy sprigs stick out above it. Both women hold cups (*skyphoi*), and the one to the left dips into one of the *stamnoi* with a ladle. The *stamnoi* with this scene are often called "Lenaia vases," implying that they represent that Dionysiac festival, about which we know very little. In fact, there is no sound evidence to support that association.

The mask-idol first appears on a group of black-figure vases, mostly *lēkythoi* from a small group of workshops at the beginning of the fifth century, and may well represent a rustic idol with which Athenians would have been familiar. Women move about the idol, sometimes accompanied by satyrs and ithyphallic donkeys,

Figure 26.12 Women worshiping at mask image of Dionysus on an Attic red-figure stamnos from Falerii Veteres ca. 440 BC. Villa Giulia 983. Photograph: Soprintendenza per i Bene Archeologici di Lazio, Sezione Etruria Meridionale

suggesting that these are figures from myth. The last of the "Lenaia" *stamnoi*, ca. 420 BC, has women given names used exclusively for nymphs on other vases. On another *stamnos* one of the women holds a satyr child. It is entirely possible that all of the women on the Lenaia vases should be seen as nymphs rather than as mortals, and that the scene has nothing to do with an Attic festival (Carpenter 1997a:79–84).

The shape of the *stamnos* (a modern name for the vase) originated in Etruria, and most Attic *stamnoi* have been found in Italy, including most of the "Lenaia" *stamnoi*. Also, the only depictions of the *stamnos* shape on Greek vases are precisely on these *stamnoi*, where it is used in place of a krater for mixing wine. Thus there is reason to see the Attic *stamnos* as primarily an export commodity. This does not necessarily mean that the imagery was specially designed for export, but it does give us pause if we want to use it as evidence of Attic religious behavior.

It should be clear by now that treating depictions of religious activity on vases as evidence for actual practices needs to be done with great care. The images provide an immediacy lacking in textual material, yet at the same time our understanding of details depends in large part on texts, which raises the danger of circularity in our discussions. We must be extremely careful not to ignore contexts or problematic elements of imagery, and not to focus only on elements we think we understand. The *stamnos* with the sacrificial scene on it discussed above is a case in point.

The *stamnos* discussed earlier with a depiction of the aftermath of a sacrifice on it was certainly made in Athens, though it was found in an Etruscan tomb along with another *stamnos* with a nearly identical scene on it. The sacrificer on our *stamnos* is named with a Greek inscription, Archenautes, which may be the name of an Athenian citizen, but the similar figure on the other *stamnos* is named Diomedes, who is more likely the epic hero. The Nike hovering above in both scenes hints at a larger-than-life context. We have no idea why the painter included the names on objects made for export, or what the names meant to the Etruscans or for that matter to Athenians. While these questions may not affect our understanding of the details of the sacrifice in Athens, they should nonetheless give us pause.

Funerary Imagery

The absence of religious imagery in funerary art, where one might expect to find it, is particularly notable. Some of the earliest representations of human figures in Greek art, on Attic geometric vases, ca. 750 BC, show mourners in ritual funerary contexts, and there is a continuous tradition of such representations on through the fifth century. Most often the figures mourn beside a body that lies in state (*prothesis*) or they accompany the body as it is conveyed to the tomb (*ekphora*). What is lacking, from the beginning to the end of the series, is any reference to deities or to hope of an afterlife. The same is true of sculpted grave reliefs, which become particularly numerous after about 430 BC. The focus is on the importance of the deceased and the perpetuation of his or her memory in this world.

In this context another type of Attic vase that came to be used explicitly as funerary ware should be mentioned. As early as 500 BC, Attic potters were experimenting with a technique called "white ground" in which the surface of the vase was covered with a white slip on which figures were painted, early on in black-figure, then in outline, and later still with colors added: reds, browns, yellows, and later greens, blues, and mauves. Some vase-painters experimented with the technique on cups and kraters, but by the middle of the fifth century it was restricted primarily to *lēkythoi*, oil jars that were buried in graves with the body or later placed on the tomb as dedications. Almost all of these white-figure funerary *lēkythoi* have been found in Attica or in Eretria on the nearby island of Euboea; they were rarely an export item, and thus their imagery and function can be seen as distinctly Attic. The white slip and added colors are delicate and easily damaged, and it has been suggested that such an impermanent technique is appropriate for tombs, where they would have been seen only briefly (Boardman 1989:130). After about 400 BC they ceased to be produced.

Figure 26.13 Hermes leading a woman to Charon on a white-ground *lēkythos* from Athens, ca. 450 BC. Athens, NM 1926. After Riezler 1914: fig. 44a

On the white-ground *lēkythoi* the vast majority of the scenes show mourners visiting the tomb or at home preparing for such a visit. *Prothesis* appears on a few, and on a few a new mythology of death is developed. The boatman, Charon, who ferries souls across a river (Acheron) or a lake (Acherousia) into the realm of Hades, first appears on two black-figure vases of about 500 BC, but it is only after the middle of the fifth century that images of him become at all common. Images of Charon in Greek art are limited almost entirely to white-ground *lēkythoi*. On a *lēkythos* from Athens (Figure 26.13), ca. 430 BC, Hermes, as guide to the souls (*psychopompos*) leads a veiled woman to a boat in which Charon, dressed as a laborer, stands with his ferryman's pole. Around them five tiny winged figures flutter; these are souls of the dead (*eidōla*). There is nothing frightening or disturbing about the scene; it is little more than a gentle metaphor for death.

Another scene that appears less often shows Sleep (Hypnos) and Death (Thanatos) lifting a body off the ground. The earliest depiction of this on Attic vases, from before the end of the sixth century, show the two as twins, as described by Homer (*Iliad* 16.667–83) with the body of Sarpedon. On white-ground vases the scene has become generic, the body can be male or female, and Hypnos as been changed into a beautiful youth while Thanatos become a disheveled older man, itself a statement of sorts. Here too we have a comforting metaphor for death rather than a statement of belief (Figure 26.14).

Clearly the modern term "religious art" with its connotations that an image expresses or encourages piety or spirituality would have made little sense to fifth-century Athenians. That being said, it is probably true that artisans in fifth-century Athens – vase-painters, sculptors, builders, goldsmiths, carpenters, and the like – spent their careers creating objects that had religious functions as cult statues and temples, sacrificial vessels, and, above all, votive offerings. Virtually every building

Figure 26.14 Sleep and Death lifting the body of a dead warrior on a white-ground lekythos from Athens, ca. 450 BC. London D 58. After Robert 1879: pl. 2

and each of the thousands of objects placed on the Acropolis was put there with one god or another in mind. Thus these products of the Attic artisans' labor were part of the marvelously complex interweaving of economic, artistic, and political motivations that shaped Athenians' responses to their gods.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

The new *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (*ThesCRA*) is a useful compendium of images related to Greek (and Roman) religion. While virtually any study of Greek art or archaeology will include, to one degree or another, material manifestations of religion, Robertson 1975 continues to be an invaluable source of artistic contexts for material remains. Whitley 2001 provides archaeological contexts for a broad range of sanctuaries and festivals, while Simon 1983 specifically treats the archaeology of Attic festivals.

Neils 1992 is a reliable and richly illustrated source for on overview of the Panathenaic festival. Vos 1981 discusses use of the amphoras; Bentz 1998 gives a catalog of the surviving vases; A. Johnston 1987 presents the epigraphical evidence. For the Panathenaic frieze from the Parthenon, Jenkins 1994 and Neils 2001 both provide sensible discussions and good images. Boardman 1985 includes a well-illustrated overview of the Parthenon sculpture. For reconstructions of the east metopes, see Prashniker 1928. Carpenter 1997b discusses the metope with Apollo and that god's changing role in the Gigantomachy. For evidence for the lost statue of Athena Parthenos see Herrington 1955 and Leipen 1971. Hurwit 1999 gives a

comprehensive survey of the history and archaeology of the Acropolis. Raubitschek 1949 remains the standard work on dedicatory inscriptions from the Acropolis, but see now Keesling 2003 and, for offerings in the Parthenon, Harris 1995. See Van Straten 1981 and 1990 for a useful discussion of votive offerings. For a thorough and well-illustrated discussion of the stages of sacrifice and the implements used see Van Straten 1995.

Frontisi-Ducroux 1991 and Carpenter 1997a give differing interpretations of the "Lenaia vases." For studies of funerary imagery on Attic vases, see Oakley 2004 and Shapiro 1991.

PART IX

Epilogue

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Gods of the Silver Screen: Cinematic Representations of Myth and Divinity

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

Ever since cinema's infancy, myth – and Greek mythology in particular – has been a mainstay of cinematic output, in that films either incorporate mythological names or characters in their titles – *The Andromeda Strain* (dir. Wise, 1971), *The Poseidon Adventure* (dir. Neame, 1972), *Black Narcissus* (dir. Powell, 1947) – or else recreate episodes from classical mythology. Jon Solomon estimates that there have been over eighty mythological movies made by American and European film studios to date, proving that movie producers are keen to mine the depths of classical myth for screen materials (Solomon 2001:101). The release of films like Disney's animated feature *Hercules* (dir. Clements and Musker, 1997) and the blockbuster *Troy* (dir. Petersen, 2004) demonstrates that Greek mythology continues to play a significant role in the construction of ancient history in mass popular culture. As Martin Winkler puts it:

> Ancient myths and archetypes recurring in films attest to the vitality of our own cultural tradition. Retellings of classical stories on film show that filmmakers have used the ancient material consciously in order to comment on their own times or that they unconsciously reflect cultural trends. Ancient myths can also provide instances of more or less imaginative entertainment. In such processes the classical sources may become imbued with a creative art and intelligence not readily apparent to a casual viewer. Openly commercial films set in antiquity, whose historical or mythological accuracy may leave much to be desired, can still reward a close engagement with their underlying qualities. (Winkler 2001:3)

Winkler identifies two types of cinematic approach to mythology in film: a "high art" approach, permeated with "intelligence," by which he refers to complex European

art-house movies such as *Medea* (dir. Pasolini, 1970), *Phèdre* (dir. Dassin, 1962), and *Orphée* (dir. Cocteau, 1949), and a "low art" approach, in which the naive vision of mythology is dictated by commercial box-office necessity. Here Winkler no doubt alludes to the Italian "peplum" movies of the 1950s and 1960s such as *Hercules Unchained* (dir. Francisci, 1959) and *Hercules, Samson and Ulysses* (dir. Francisci, 1961), which were big on muscles and mass appeal, but low on budgets and historical integrity. But this is too simplistic a breakdown, as Richard Buxton has recently recognized:

> The enduring attractiveness of the ancient myths [is not] restricted to what [is] described as "high" culture. If film, television and computer software are solid indicators of popular taste, then . . . the popularity of films such as *Jason and the Argonauts* [and] *Clash of the Titans* . . . and of the TV series *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess* . . . suggest that the decline in the cultural centrality of classical antiquity in most Western countries has far from extinguished the appetite for ancient stories. Such retellings should not be taken as a sign that the "true meaning" of the myths has been forgotten or falsified. On the contrary: they are a sign of vigour, and should be welcomed as such. (Buxton 2004:245)

Some commercial myth movies actually display an enormous integrity towards ancient source materials without ever compromising their popular accessibility or their box-office appeal. Two such films, already cited by Buxton, stand head and shoulders above all others: *Jason and the Argonauts* (dir. Chaffey, 1960) and *Clash of the Titans* (dir. Davis, 1981) were enormous box office hits and share and benefit from the superb special effects of Ray Harryhausen's SuperDynamation and the clear narrative outlines of Beverley Cross' witty and involving scriptwriting.

In this chapter I will explore how, between them, Harryhausen and Cross responded to Greek mythology and adapted aspects of its diverse output for the big screen (because of his impact on the genre I will refer to these myth movies as Harryhausen films). Rather than take on board the many and varied elements of their cinematic responses to the Jason and Perseus myths as a whole, I will focus here on how cinema artists visualize and utilize the Olympian gods (in many ways the starting point of this chapter), who play key roles in the films, as a means of assessing the filmmakers' appreciation and knowledge of original mythic and historical sources. It is not my intention here to show where the films diverge from received accounts of the ancient myths per se; instead I want to highlight how and why the Olympians are presented on film and to question how far their portrayals play with ancient conceptions of divinity (for which see, most importantly, Sissa and Detienne 2000 and Otto 1954).

That said, it is important to have a brief synopsis of the films' plots, simply as a means of assessing how the gods are utilized within their narrative structure. What follows here are the very briefest outlines.

Jason and the Argonauts (1960)

Jason (Todd Armstrong) has been deprived of his kingdom by King Pelias (Douglas Wilmer) who, when Jason was still an infant, slaughtered his mother and siblings in

the temple of Hera (Honor Blackman) at Corinth. The outraged goddess resolves to protect the child, and gains the reluctant permission of Zeus (Niall McGinnis). When he reaches maturity Jason is brought to Olympus by Hermes (Michael Gwynn) and is told that he can regain his rightful throne by bringing home the Golden Fleece from Colchis. A ship is built by Argos (Laurence Naismith) and with the help of Hera, who appears as the ship's (misplaced) figurehead, Jason sets out with the Argonauts, including Hercules (Nigel Green) and Acastus (Gary Raymond). They encounter and defeat the bronze monster Talos, before imprisoning the harpies who have been terrorizing the blind seer Phineas (Patrick Troughton). Jason and the Argonauts fight their way through the Clashing Rocks in order to reach Colchis and are saved from drowning by Hera, who instructs Triton to save the Argo. Arriving at Colchis, Jason falls in love with Princess Medea (Nancy Kovack), the priestess of Hecate. Her father, King Aeetes (Jack Gwillim), tries to prevent Jason taking the Fleece, but after killing the hydra which protects it, Jason and Medea flee the kingdom. Aeetes pursues them and sows the teeth of the hydra into the earth, whence spring skeleton warriors. With two of his men Jason fights and conquers the skeleton army before rejoining Medea on board the Argo to sail towards their future.

The Clash of the Titans (1981)

Zeus (Laurence Olivier) has fathered a child by Danae (Vida Taylor), whom she names Perseus. Her father, King Acrisius of Argos (Donald Houston) casts mother and child into the sea in a wooden chest, but they are saved by Zeus' interference. He commands Poseidon (Jack Gwillim) to release the sea-monster known as the Kraken, the last of the Titans, to destroy mankind. Years pass, and Perseus (Harry Hamlin) grows to manhood with the help of Zeus and despite the complaints of jealous Hera (Claire Bloom). Thetis (Maggie Smith), angered when Zeus turns her son Calibos (Neil McCarthy) into a sub-human creature, transports Perseus to her cult-city of Joppa, where he meets an actor named Ammon (Burgess Meredith) and falls in love with Andromeda (Judi Bowker), daughter of Queen Cassiopeia (Siân Phillips). But Andromeda's suitors are required to answer impossible riddles or be killed. Having received several magical gifts from the goddesses Hera, Aphrodite (Ursula Andress), Athena (Susan Fleetwood), and the god Hephaestus (Pat Roach), one night Perseus captures the winged horse Pegasus and flies to Calibos' lair, where he learns the riddle that nightly he commands Andromeda to repeat. Calibos fights with Perseus, and in the tussle Calibos' hand is severed from his wrist. He offers the severed hand at the altar of his mother Thetis and demands vengeance. Perseus is betrothed to Andromeda and in a temple ritual Cassiopeia declares that her daughter is more beautiful than even Thetis. The already angry goddess is made furious and declares that Joppa will soon fall victim to the Kraken unless Andromeda is offered to him as a sacrifice of atonement. Perseus learns that the stare of the Gorgon Medusa will render any creature, even a Titan, lifeless, and so he seeks her out and cuts off her head. He returns to Joppa just in time to slay Calibos and save Andromeda from the Kraken. Perseus and Andromeda are married and immortalized in the stars by Zeus.

Divine Apparatus in Homeric Style

Ray Harryhausen has called Greek mythology "a rich source for fantasy projects and therefore stop-motion animation." He has also noted that:

> There are few other sources where you could find so many adventures, bizarre creatures and larger-than-life heroes. Most films in the genre, including the Italian sword-and-sandal epics of the '50s and '60s, had concentrated on the heroes, heroines and villains while more or less ignoring the creatures and the machinations of the gods. So I asked myself: what if we make a film that featured the creatures and the gods and used the humans to link the story? That was how *Jason and the Argonauts* was born. (Harryhausen and Dalton 2005:99)

Aware of the liberties he and his fellow-filmmakers took with some of the key elements of the ancient myths, Harryhausen is nonetheless pleased with the final results: "I suspect the Greeks would have been pleased with what we did – even if the academics have not always been quite so impressed" (Harryhausen and Dalton 2005:99). His paranoia about the academic credentials of the myth movies is unfounded, for after all Harryhausen himself has called Beverley Cross "an expert on Greek mythology" (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:152). Certainly judging from early drafts of the scripts for *Jason and the Argonauts* and *The Clash of the Titans*, Cross deserves the commendation. He investigated a myriad of mythic possibilities which could be incorporated into filmic narratives before finally settling on the stories outlined above. Watching the films, it becomes clear that Cross' understanding and knowledge of the scope of Greek myth were extensive, but we can sense a meticulous comprehension of the minutiae of mythology in the more detailed aspects of his scripts, especially in scenes set in Olympus amongst the gods. There can be little doubt that Cross' conception of divinity, as utilized in his movies and the subsequent reworking of *Jason*, derives from a thorough understanding of the Homeric approach to godhead; the fashioning of the gods of the silver screen is modeled on predominantly epic forms.

Even the casual reader of Homer will know that the gods frequently intervene in human affairs, to such an extent that they can alter human behavior and thought processes – imbuing a hero with courage, or limiting his desire for a vengeful frenzy of slaughter. This premise forms the basis for the filmic use of the gods, as the storylines cut between heaven and earth, showing the gods viewing, deliberating on, or interfering in the lives of the on-screen heroes. Yet to judge from the Homeric poems the representation of the gods is ambiguous – we are told that they are different from mortals in that they have no sense of earthly time, no physical bodies, and that they are terrible to behold. At the same time, Homer insists that they live lives remarkably like those of humans – they love, hate, suffer, even look like (admittedly beautiful) mortals, but have the ability to fly, become invisible, or conjure great strength.

Cinematic interpretations of the gods delight in playing up these Homeric inconsistencies, and use the double-sided nature of Olympian divinity to augment the films' plots: gods are omnipresent and ever watchful for the welfare of their mortal favorites, but they are simultaneously distracted from a specific action which often

puts that cherished mortal into danger. In the *Iliad*, for example, Hera seduces Zeus so that his attention will drift from his vigilant protection of the Trojan warriors, and his brief absence from his watching-post brings about a change of fortunes in the war. In *The Clash of the Titans*, Zeus only has to turn his back on his beloved Perseus for an instant before Thetis is seen causing trouble for the vulnerable youth. As he sleeps, she reaches down from the sky and, with her hand, picks him up off his lonely but safe desert island and transplants him into her sacred city of Joppa: "It is time for chance to intervene," she declares. "Time you saw something of the world, Perseus. Time you came face to face with fear. Time to know the terrors of the dark and look on death; time your eyes were opened to grim reality. Far to the east, in Joppa, in the kingdom of Phoenicia." Thetis' malevolent action is the catalyst for the movie adventure to begin.

The "us-and-them" ideology of mortal–immortal relationships becomes a vital element of the cinematic construction of Greek myth. But how is the polarity of powerful divinity and inferior mortality played up on screen? Filmmakers employ the full battery of cinematic armory to create this opposition, which by and large follows Homeric models closely

Olympus

The community of the gods lives on Olympus, high in the sky – a space where time is unchanging. That the gods belong by definition to a plane beyond that which mortals can touch or see is a given. If the gods decide to interact with men, disguised as beggars or nursemaids, or to move unseen among the battlefields of Troy, they do so only as visitors, and always return to their Olympian home. Of course, that the physical mass of Mount Olympus can be seen from afar (it is even visible from Thessaloniki on a clear day) is another Homeric contradiction, for the folds of Olympus correspond to Heaven.

In *Jason and the Argonauts*, Olympus is envisaged as a vast and essentially tangible citadel with a monumental propylaea decorated with "classical" friezes and flanked by immense white marble statues of Zeus and Athena, opening up onto a gleaming white marble colonnaded hallway and a multi-leveled room constructed from giant blocks of veined marble. Ornate bronze lamps, chairs, footstools, cushions, and tables give the impression of a lavishly furnished neoclassical stately home set amidst the clouds. This Olympus is very much a palace for the gods. Harryhausen explains his design decisions:

> Olympus . . . had to look impressive and inspiring, but not cost too much, so we used a long-shot of [a] temple-like palace set where the gods are seen entertaining themselves, then combined that with a matée painting . . . We painted the set pure white with gold embellishments . . . As a final touch we later added in the lab an edge of mist around the frame. (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:155)

The notion that this palace is otherworldly is strengthened not only by the misty edges of the screen frame but also by the camera panning upwards from the earth to the sky (usually passing through the clouds) as the story cuts from earth to heaven.

The same technique of aerial photography and cloud effects is utilized in *The Clash of the Titans*, but here the realization of Olympus is more ephemeral. The establishing shot shows a mountain-top city of classical domes, colonnades, and pediments set against a background of an ethereal city inspired in one part by John Martin's epic painting *Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still* and in another part by Michael Gandy's early nineteenth-century oil painting *Jupiter Pluvius*, and created in model form in one of the sound studios at Pinewood (Harryhausen and Dalton 2005:18, 21). Working with the production designer, Frank White, Harryhausen recalls how "We created an Olympus that combined the look of paradise and a realistic dwelling for supreme beings, a reflection of the ancient Greek image of the home of the gods" (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:265).

Externally, Olympus appears to be a physically definable space, but on entering its halls all sense of logical scale and perspective evaporates. Zeus' throne room or council chamber is a vast, echoing, misty environment of immense proportions. Harryhausen explains that "We went for outsized columns (of which we could only see the bases), suggesting massive structures that could only be guessed at" (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:265). The set-dressings are radically modified and kept to a minimum when compared to the ostentations of Olympus in *Jason and the Argonauts*. Here only huge circular mosaics ornament the floor; there is no redundant furniture and no superfluous décor, just vast, empty, vaporous spaces. The only necessary piece of set-dressing is Zeus' throne, raised on a lofty platform and decorated with golden lions and coiled snakes.

However, in keeping with the Homeric conception of Olympus being divided into specific areas, such as the bedchamber where Aphrodite and Ares are discovered *in flagrante* by Hephaestus and subsequently watched by the other gods, this cinematic heavenly mansion has many rooms too. Hephaestus, for example, is shown hard at work in his hot and dirty forge, adjacent to Zeus' throne room. Most importantly the same throne room has a semi-circular antechamber, decorated with archaic winged sphinxes, whose walls are pocked with hundreds of small niches containing terracotta statuettes of all the mortal inhabitants of the earth.

Anthropomorphism, Transformation, and Metamorphosis

To enable the audience to identify with the characters of the gods they are shown in human form. This is an epic tradition (Burkert 1985:182–9). In Homer, with the exception of immortal *ichōr* in place of human blood, the bodies of gods and mortals correspond entirely: their limbs are the same, their tissues and organs are identical. They groom and dress themselves like humans; in the *Iliad* we see that Hera's skin, like any mortal woman's, needs to be cared for with scents and oils. Her white-armed beauty is not easily maintained.

The flawless bodies of the immortals are frequently depicted in Greek art, where the gods are usually given special attributes or costumes to remind the viewer exactly who's who in the divine family. In the most simplistic terms Athena wears a helmet or carries an owl; Artemis has her quiver and bow; Dionysus his crown of vine leaves (Childs 1998; Woodford 2003). The on-screen gods are given many of the same

attributes and wear costumes recognizably "ancient Greek." In *The Clash of the Titans*, for example, all of the gods wear white robes, in imitation of sculpture, with slight variations to suggest character: Hera's head is veiled, Aphrodite's robe falls off one shoulder, Zeus wears a long-sleeved tunic beneath his *himation*, in contrast to Poseidon who is bare-chested beneath his. As Harryhausen recalls: "[We dressed] the actors in white togas [*sic*], which were distinctly different to the humans' more earthy colours" (Harryhausen and Dalon 2003:155).

But cinema audiences cannot be trusted to recognize the signs spelled out through costumes and sets. Other methods need to be adopted to ensure that film viewers recognize different gods and, moreover, appreciate the essential qualities that individual gods incorporate. Therefore the on-screen image of the god and the movie star who plays the deity are often merged in the audience's subconscious in order to clarify the type of god being portrayed.

Harryhausen and his producer, Charles Schneer, got the idea of casting the Olympians with a bunch of international stars, and so in *The Clash of the Titans* the phenomenon is knowingly played up to the film's advantage: Zeus, king of all gods, is hammed up relentlessly by Laurence Olivier, king of all actors; Hera, his queen, is played by Claire Bloom, Olivier's leading lady at the RSC for many decades and something of a figure of elegant respectability in theatrical circles. The love goddess Aphrodite is the Swiss love goddess Ursula Andress, who like Aphrodite arose from the sea in *Dr No* (dir. Young, 1962) and set the world on fire. Thetis, the dry-witted sea goddess, is played to perfection by the caustic Maggie Smith (Beverly Cross' wife). Indeed, one of the major pleasures of *The Clash of the Titans* is the preponderance in the cast of women "of a certain age." Claire Bloom, Maggie Smith, and Siân Phillips (as Queen Cassiopeia) demonstrate effectively that it is entirely possible for female characters to be gorgeous, strong, and interesting *despite* being played by actresses over the age of 25 (in significant contrast, Ursula Andress does not speak a single line in the film, although off-screen, of course, she was – true to her Olympian character – conducting a passionate romance with Perseus).

The divine hierarchy of Olympus is therefore reflected in the casting of the characters, especially in terms of age and status. The gods "frieze" in age to reflect their position in the Olympian genealogy: Zeus and Hera are depicted as the older generation, Athena is a young woman, Hermes a young man. The same principle is followed in the casting of particular actors in specific roles.

The clever work of the casting director permits an audience with limited knowledge of the Greek gods to identify immediately the character traits of the Olympians with the off-screen and inter-filmic personas of the stars who portray them. To avoid any further confusion, however, the movies opt to show only a select handful of the many gods of the Greek pantheon: *The Clash of the Titans* shows Zeus, Hera, Athena, Thetis, Poseidon, Hephaestus, and Aphrodite, while *Jason and the Argonauts* highlights only Hermes, Zeus, and Hera (another clever piece of casting – with Honor Blackman as the Olympian queen). This movie differs, however, in its depiction of the wider family of the gods, who are seen dotted around Olympus engaged in various leisurely pastimes and group together behind Hera and Zeus as curious observers when the mortal Jason is brought to visit them.

As an introduction to the gods in *Jason and the Argonauts*, Hermes, the messenger and herald of the gods, appears to Jason as an old man, a seer, who transforms himself

into a god; the moment is captured in some rare surviving storyboard sketches: "The seer's face becomes watery and is transformed . . . into Hermes" (Harryhausen and Dalton 2005:105). Harryhausen had some interesting ideas for Hermes' transportation of Jason to Olympus:

> In one of the early scripts Hermes, in the form of man, asks Jason to climb into his chariot, whereupon Jason witnesses his transformation into a god (but without any increase in size). The journey to Olympus is also interesting. With one pull of the reins the horses are transformed into unicorns and fire spits from the wheels of the chariot taking both Hermes and Jason into the sky. Sadly, the script was altered to save time and money, and we ended up with almost a straight transition to Olympus through a dissolve. (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:155)

In the final film version, as he casts off his human guise, so Hermes grows in stature until Jason is dwarfed by the vast figure of the god. He places Jason in his hand and carries him heavenward before setting him down on a tabletop in the hall of the gods. Here the minuscule hero is examined by the giant figures of the Olympians, who loom over him like curious children.

The inspiration for this transformation scene is found in a famous passage from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, where the goddess casts off her restrictive mortal form and displays herself in all her divinity. As her golden locks fall around her shoulders, as sweet smells emanate from her robes, and light blazes from her body, so too she grows in size, dwarfing the frightened mortals at her feet (*Homeric Hymn* 2 [to Demeter] 275–80). The common Greek assumption that the gods are bigger than mortals is given wide rein in the movies. *Jason and the Argonauts* plays on this notion, employing camera trickery to convey the diminutive scale of mortals compared to the massive proportions of the gods. In *The Clash of the Titans*, Thetis' giant hand scoops the sleeping Perseus off his island home and places him down in the city of Joppa as her face appears in the moon and dominates the night sky. Why is scale an issue in the on-screen retelling of these myths? In terms of *Jason and the Argonauts*, Harryhausen recalls that:

> Both the Art Director and I discussed how we could depict the actors as gods. We didn't want to cut from the mortal world to the gods with barely anything to differentiate between them, so we decided to use a variety of images and designs to give the impression that the gods were truly omnipotent and dominated the world of humans. The obvious trick was to make the gods huge versions of humans. . . . [Thus when] Jason arrives on Olympus in the hand of Hermes, he steps onto [a] board game that Zeus has before him. For this confrontation with Zeus we built a full-sized board with oversized pieces on which [Jason] would deliver his lines upward, towards the camera, so as to appear as if he were talking to a gigantic Zeus. I used a travelling matte of [Jason], against yellow backing . . . [showing him] with his back to the camera as Hermes places him on the chessboard. . . . Combined with the gods looking down at him, it seemed that a tiny Jason is standing in front of them. (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:154–5)

In addition to stories of the gigantic scale of the immortals, Greek mythology is peppered with stories of gods shifting shape and metamorphosing into animal (or more abstract) forms; the seductions of Zeus are often played out against this

background, although Thetis is perhaps mythology's most advanced shape-shifter, morphing from animal to reptile to fish in order to ward off the unwanted advances of the mortal Peleus (Forbes Irving 1990). However, this most fantastical of divine powers is (oddly) only infrequently used in filmic renditions of myth. *The Clash of the Titans* uses the theme the most: Hermes takes the form of a sea bird (a common feature in transformation myths) in order to fly from earth to Olympus, and (more tentatively) Thetis' son Calibos is transformed on screen (but in silhouette) from handsome youth to deformed monster, but otherwise there are no further on-screen metamorphoses. Allusion is made in the script, however, to Zeus' habit of morphing shape in order to seduce. Thetis, the most confirmed shape-shifter, leads the goddesses in criticizing Zeus' womanizing:

THETIS. So many women, and all these transformations and disguises he invents in order to seduce them. Sometimes a shower of gold, sometimes a bull or a swan. Why, once he even tried to ravish me disguised as a cuttlefish . . .
HERA. Did he succeed?
THETIS. Certainly not!
ATHENA. What did you do?
THETIS. Beat him at his own game. I simply turned myself into a shark.
[*They laugh*]

Epiphanies

Closely related, in cinematic terms at least, to the notion of shape-shifting is the concept of the epiphany – the god's appearance (through voice or physical manifestation: Burkert 1997) to mortals. Epiphanies have an irresistible draw for the filmmaker since, like metamorphoses, they afford an opportunity for special effects and the furtherance of cinematic narration. They can take an overt form of display or a more subtle form of manifestation. A particularly popular tradition is that whereby an inanimate statue (or other artifact) takes on a living shape or else acquires the ability to speak. In the opening scene of *Jason and the Argonauts* the hero's eldest sister, fleeing from Pelias' persecution, takes refuge in the temple of Hera and throws herself at the feet of her *xoanon*, beseeching the goddess' aid. Hera appears on screen in shadow, swathed in black veils and standing behind the statue, whence she promises the girl help. While she does not inhabit the statue, she is identified as the power the statue represents. Later, however, when Jason builds the Argo, he places a similar wooden image of the goddess at the stern of the ship. This time the goddess' essence enters into the statue and animates it: Hera's great ox-eyes open and her voice, heard (at first) only by Jason and the audience, resonates from within the painted figurine. This conceptualization of Hera caused Harryhausen some disquiet:

> The Hera figurehead, located at the stern of the vessel, was designed so that the eyelids opened and the eyes moved, but I drew back from making the mouth move, as I felt most audiences would liken it to a ventriloquist's dummy, and it would then become borderline comedy. In the end we decided that Hera would communicate with Jason in his mind. (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:153)

In *The Clash of the Titans*, when Calibos enters the temple of Thetis and prays before an enormous white-marble seated statue of his goddess-mother (''Beg your beloved lord Poseidon to let loose the Kraken,'' he pleads), she responds to his prayer by appearing in the statue – a projection of Maggie Smith's animated features thrown onto the white face of the statue. Later, when angered by Cassiopeia's insistence that Andromeda is ''even more lovely than the goddess Thetis herself,'' Thetis smashes her cult statue, and the huge stone head, collapsed from its body, rolls forward to become animated once more as Thetis threatens to destroy the kingdom of Joppa unless it sacrifices the virginal Andromeda to the Kraken:

> Hear me, vain and foolish mortal woman: you dare compare your daughter's beauty to mine, and in my own sacred sanctuary? You will repent your boast and the cruel injury you have inflicted on my poor Calibos. . . . For the insult you have given me, I demand the life of Andromeda!

And with that the statue collapses and the gods reveal their real powers.

Even Zeus opts to show himself to mortals: in *The Clash of the Titans* he appears to Perseus reflected in the gleam of a golden shield, a gift to the hero from the gods. ''Who are you?'' asks Perseus. But Zeus gives nothing away: ''Find and fulfill your destiny'' is all he has to say, leaving it up to the wise old Ammon to comment, ''The gods indeed move in mysterious ways.''

Besides physical epiphanies, the device of dreams is used at several important junctures within the movies. In *The Clash of the Titans* Andromeda's dream-double leaves her body each night and is taken to the lair of Calibos, where nightly she learns a new riddle to test her suitors. Likewise, the adventure begins when, in sleep, Thetis visits Perseus and instructs him that his future lies in Joppa. Thetis also dictates the course of the story through her epiphanies in dreams. She declares: ''If my son is not to marry [Andromeda] then no man will. My priests of Joppa are loyal. I will speak to them in dreams and omens. As my Calibos suffers, so shall Andromeda!''

Time and Space

Filmic retellings of myth delight in playing games with the audience in terms of time and space. Film editing means that the audience can be transported effortlessly between mortal and divine worlds. In the Harryhausen films the physical demarcation of mortal/immortal space is more clearly defined. The gods are not omnipresent; they choose specific moments to examine (and sometimes interact with) mortals and therefore utilize a viewing portal over the mortal world. In *Jason and the Argonauts*, for example, it is a pool of water which serves as this viewing screen: Zeus and Hera are both seen gazing into the blue waters of the pool which shows them the action of their chosen hero on earth. In effect the audience sees the action from the gods' point of view. But the audience is privileged in another way too, since they can observe the gods in action (without the gods' knowledge) and thereby delight in the knowledge of the gods' divine plans and machinations before the mortal on-screen heroes do. The cinema audience therefore has the ability both to eavesdrop on the gods and to witness the events of the story from their vantage point.

Similarly, the audience's conception of time can be stretched and twisted. This is a strong feature of the myth movies, but not of Greek epic tradition *per se*. While Homer continually establishes temporal connections to unite his poems to the world in which his culture is rooted, concepts of external time and inner time do not exist for him; only physical time matters. He looks only at what happens outside in the bright, visible, concrete, unique, and real world; the notion of abstract time does not occur to him. There is no reference, therefore, to an immortal time, or to a time lapse between the world of the gods and the world of men. The gods, immortal beings, ageless though they might be, do not operate within a separate time sphere; they share the same timescale as men.

In contrast the cinema has been obsessed with distorting time and rendering it convoluted, and cinema's tricks with time have become an accepted convention: the movies have trained their viewers to follow the most contorted temporal patterns with such ease that it seems "natural," and even the most routine films skip back and forth between narrative worlds (cross-cutting), and elongate or compress specific moments or even repeat incidents, sometimes from multiple perspectives. The dimension of time is important in any cinematic structure, and even some pop-culture films exploit cinema's ability to conjure with time with great box-office success. Movies such as *Back to the Future* (dir. Zemeckis, 1985), *Terminator-2* (dir. Cameron, 1984), and *Peggy Sue Got Married* (dir. Ford Coppola, 1986) effectively play with cinema's ability to juggle conceptions of time and space.

The myth movies capitalize on the filmic twists of time to great narrative advantage, and one which highlights, moreover, the divergence between man and god. The idea of two parallel timescales running in opposition is highlighted towards the beginning of *Jason and the Argonauts*. Having appeared (in mortal guise) to King Pelias, and having pronounced his future overthrow by "a man with one sandal," Hera returns to Olympus where she is chastised by Zeus for interfering with the affairs of mortals. She insists that her patronage is just, and declares:

> It will be twenty years before Jason becomes a man. Oh, an instant of time here on Mount Olympus, but a long twenty years for king Pelias [she gazes through the pool of water at Pelias on horseback]. He cautiously travels the roads of Thessaly. Yes, Pelias, you have had years of watching and waiting for the one who must come to kill you. The man with one sandal.

Thus within a minute of on-screen "real time" in Olympus, twenty years fly by for the mortal protagonists of the movie. The same convention is used in *The Clash of the Titans*: as the voices of the gods are heard in conversation, an on-screen montage shows Perseus growing to his maturity – first as a toddler walking hand in hand with his mother on the sea shore, then as a young boy running and playing, finally as a young man galloping in horseback over the same shoreline. The time it takes Perseus to reach manhood (twenty years it would seem, like Jason) is encompassed within the time span of one brief Olympian tête-à-tête.

This incongruity in time helps explain the fleeting nature of the gods' interest in mankind: a lifetime's mortal toil is a moment's passing among the Olympians. At best prayer is a minor distraction for the gods. This explains Jason's lament, "The gods will not answer those who believe, why should they answer me, who doesn't?"

Conflict, Intervention, and Immortality

In Homeric epic one of Zeus' chief concerns is to keep the other gods in check and to reaffirm his divine leadership continually. This is not always an easy task. At the opening of *Iliad* Book 4, for instance, Zeus is forced to back down from his suggestion that the gods should put an end to the war, and ends up making a compromise agreement with his wife. Yet the respect the other gods have for Zeus is clear: they acknowledge the fact that his decisions carry more weight than any of theirs. In film the same strain is placed on Zeus' powerful shoulders; he continually reasserts his authority, either with gentle coercion and good humor or with furious anger and bullying. In *Jason and the Argonauts*, Zeus is the undoubted head of the pantheon and, when Hera decides to aid Jason's quest, Zeus is perturbed and suggests that she looks after the fate of Jason's infant sister, a role more becoming for a goddess. But when Hera insists that Jason will be her concern, Zeus concedes that she may help the mortal on five occasions only and adds firmly, "That is my final word." In *The Clash of the Titans* the husband–wife relationship is of less interest than Zeus' interaction with the other Olympians – both as a group and as individuals. His pre-eminence among the gods is established visually, for only Zeus sits on a throne placed on a high dais. The gods attend on him as if in a formal court audience hall, and as they look up at him on his throne they see lightning beams radiating from his head like a halo (the effect is created by laser beams, a popular special effect in 1980s movies).

By and large, the gods obey Zeus' commands: when he instructs his brother Poseidon to "destroy Argos [and] release the Kraken," the sea god readily obeys. And yet Zeus, as we have seen, is the object of the goddess' smutty jokes and frequently has to contend with the gods' discontent. When he instructs Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena to aid Perseus by bestowing gifts on them, Zeus specifies that Athena should give the mortal her pet owl. This instruction horrifies the goddess:

ZEUS. It is my wish, my command! [*Zeus leaves.*]
ATHENA. Never! Let great Zeus rage until even Olympus shakes, but I will never part with [my owl].

As a compromise Athena asks Hephaestus to fashion a mechanical owl as a gift for Perseus. It is a clockwork reproduction of her beloved Baubo which she bestows on the baffled Perseus.

In the Homeric epics the gods are very much concerned with human affairs. One reason for this involvement is the fact that many gods and goddesses who have mated with mortals have human children or human favorites participating in the Trojan War. The gods take sides in the war in accordance with their like or dislike of one side or the other. For example, Athena and Hera, who lost a beauty contest judged by the Trojan prince Paris, are fiercely anti-Trojan, while the winner, Aphrodite, dotes on Paris and favors the Trojans in the war.

This divine partisanship is highlighted in the myth movies too. Concern for their mortal offspring causes Zeus and Thetis to quarrel on several occasions, a conflict which, indeed, fuels the plot of *The Clash of the Titans.* Thetis is adamant that laws of

gender and hierarchy rule in Olympus and that while Zeus' philandering with diverse mortals and the subsequent birth of a clutch of infants may go "unnoticed" in Heaven, the misdemeanors of any goddess lead to her chastisement. Thetis' crime of bearing a mortal child, Calibos, is punished with Calibos' own transformation from a handsome youth into a monstrous demon. Zeus, however, insists that Calibos was disciplined for a crime independent of his mother's transgression: he allegedly hunted and slaughtered Zeus' herd of sacred winged horses (only Pegasus remained). For this crime, Zeus declares, is Calibos turned into "a mortal mockery, a shameful mark of . . . vile cruelty." Thetis weeps and begs Zeus to spare her son, but the king of Olympus is adamant: "This is my final judgment," he says. But when Zeus' back is turned, Thetis claims her right to avenge her son and her plan of action for her unrelenting torment of Perseus begins. Nevertheless, at the close of the film, and with Perseus' triumph over the Kraken, and over Thetis and her son, it is left to Zeus to gloat:

ZEUS. Perseus has won. My son has triumphed!
HERA. A fortunate young man.
ZEUS. Fortune is ally to the brave.

The interest and involvement of the gods in human lives have an important effect on the action of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The gods universalize the action of the poem. Because the gods take interest in human affairs, the events described in the epics are not just particular actions of little significance, but take on a universal meaning and importance that would have been missing without the gods. On the one hand, the involvement of the gods exalts human action. Thus, when Achilles in *Iliad* Book 1 considers killing Agamemnon, his decision not to kill could have been presented on a purely human level without the intervention of a deity, but we are shown just how critical a decision it is by the involvement of Athena. Throughout the *Iliad* there is a tendency to present action consistently on two planes, the human and the divine. On the other hand, the gods also serve to emphasize the limitations of man, how short his life is, and, quite paradoxically in view of the previously stated purpose, how ultimately meaningless human affairs are. The same justification for human–immortal interactions can be found in the myth movies. In *Jason and the Argonauts* the gods of Olympus spend their time meddling in the lives of mortal men, semi-divine offspring, and favorites, who are depicted as clay chess-pieces to be maneuvered by the likes of Zeus and Hera. When Jason is first brought to Olympus, as we have seen, he is placed on a giant chessboard as a pawn in the great Olympian game. Although this has no Homeric (or later Greek) precedent, the rationale for the chessboard image is suggested by Harryhausen: "It was important to the story that the human characters feared the gods but also saw them as . . . fickle by treating the mortals as chess pieces" (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:155). Thus, at the end of the film, with the Golden Fleece safely on board the Argo, and Medea's life having been saved by its magical powers, Zeus is able to say to Hera, over his chessboard: "For Jason there are other adventures. I have not yet finished with Jason. Let us continue the game another day."

In *The Clash of the Titans* a similar, but more sophisticated, device is used to show how the gods interfere with mortal lives: in the halls of Olympus one room contains, at its centre, a miniature arena with hundreds of tiny terracotta statuettes in niches all

around the walls. These are the game-pieces which are taken from their recesses and placed into the center of the arena by the gods. Each game-piece is made in the likeness of a human: Perseus, Calibos, Danae, Andromeda, and Acrisius of Argos all suffer a dramatic turn of Fate when their icons are placed into the arena. Like an ancient Greek magical *kolossos* or a modern voodoo doll, each terracotta statuette contains the essential life-force of the mortal being. Thus when Zeus decides to end Acrisius' life and to destroy Argos, he does so by taking the terracotta figure of Acrisius in his hand and crushing the clay to dust. As he does so, the audience is shown Acrisius in this throne room clutching at his heart in the midst of his death throes.

Harryhausen has expanded on his decision to use the arena motif in *The Clash of the Titans* in some detail:

> As it was my task to visualize the story's events, I was conscious that we had to avoid the same situations seen in *Jason*, especially in the sequence featuring the gods of Olympus. After reading an early treatment by Beverley [Cross], I felt it required a transition between gods and mortals, similar to the chessboard used in *Jason*, which communicated to the audience that a deadly game was being played by the gods for the hearts and lives of the Greeks. I came up with using a miniature arena. Behind this "arena of life" were niches containing hundreds of characters reflecting all the Greek legends. Zeus would put the figures into the arena, where the gods would control their destinies. It was a vital tool in introducing the characters of our story, which is evident when Zeus takes the figure of Calibos and commands that "He shall become abhorrent to human sight," whereupon the shadow of the tiny statue transforms into a monstrous creature. This tells you much about Zeus, and everything about Calibos, before the audience even sees him. (Harryhausen and Dalton 2003:261–2)

Yet despite the gods' control over the lives and fates of mortal characters, there remains in these films a sense of impending doom for the Olympians. Homer may not have conceived of a end for the gods, since for Homer the Olympians are as deathless as they are ageless. But for Beverley Cross the writing of the film scripts for *Jason and the Argonauts* and *The Clash of the Titans* afforded him the postmodern opportunity to tell his audience that these gods, so feared and revered by the on-screen heroes, no longer exist. Their time had past. Thus, in *The Clash of the Titans*, Thetis, alarmed that Perseus has defied the will of the gods and has completed his task of saving Andromeda by his own mortal bravery, declares that he will set a "dangerous precedent." She continues:

> THETIS. What if there more heroes like him? What if courage and imagination became everyday mortal qualities? What will become of us?
> ZEUS. We would no longer be needed. But, for the moment, there is sufficient cowardice, sloth and mendacity down there on Earth to last forever.

So while human shortcomings remain, the gods will be needed – not to set the precedent for how life should be lived (for the gods of epic and of film do not set the model for a good life, in heaven or on earth), but to terrorize, inspire, and awe mankind. But should Zeus' vision of the future of the gods fail, he has one more possibility to ensure that, if nothing else, the legends of the Greeks will never be forgotten. Zeus:

> Perseus and Andromeda will be happy together. Have fine sons . . . rule wisely . . . And to perpetuate the story of his courage, I command that from henceforth, he will be set among the stars and constellations. He, Perseus, the lovely Andromeda, the noble Pegasus, and even the vain Cassiopeia. Let the stars be named after them forever. As long as man shall walk the Earth and search the night sky in wonder, they will remember the courage of Perseus forever. Even if we, the gods, are abandoned or forgotten, the stars will never fade. Never. They will burn till the end of the time.

End Credits

The myth movies of Ray Harryhausen privilege roles for the gods since both Harryhausen and Cross realized at an early stage in the films' development that the driving force behind the Greek stories is the gods – their capriciousness, their irresponsibility, their shallowness, their cruelty. The cinema audience identifies so strongly with on-screen heroes like Jason and Perseus because they know that they are dealing with forces beyond our control, above our mortal capabilities. In this way, Jason and Perseus – heroes who do not play a significant role in Homeric epics *per se* – are given Homeric epic qualities on screen owing to their direct involvement with the gods. The gods give the films their structure and force. Realizing this, let the final word go to Roger Ebert who, writing in the *Chicago Sunday Times* in April 1980, commented:

> *The Clash of the Titans* is the kind of movie they aren't supposed to be making anymore: a grand and glorious romantic adventure, filled with quarrelling gods, brave heroes, beautiful heroines, fearsome monsters, and awe-inspiring duels to the death. It has faith in a story-telling tradition that sometimes seems almost forgotten, a tradition depending upon legends and myths, magical swords, enchanted shields, invisible helmets, and the overwhelming power of the gods.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

There are few books that tackle cinema's response to Greek myth and religion directly, although Solomon's excellent study (2001) contains a comprehensive account (chapter 3) of Greek and Roman mythology in American and European movies. He also analyzes the popularity of the peplum movies mass-produced in Italy throughout the 1950s and 1960s side by side with the art-house genre of classically inspired films made by the greats of European cinema in the same period. Disconcertingly, but accurately, he notes (2001:131) that "a truly superb film of ancient Greek myth still waits to be made." Winkler's thought-provoking work (2001) combines film theory and the classics to re-examine mythic or classical resonances in films as diverse as *Star Wars*, *9 to 5*, *The Usual Suspects*, and *Chinatown*. For a stimulating approach to film and (Christian) religion I recommend Walsh 2003, especially the first chapter, "Telling Sacred Stories in Cathedral Cinemas," which explores the correlation between cinema-going and divine worship. Of particular importance for this current chapter are two recently published, lavishly illustrated books on the work of Ray Harryhausen, both written by Harryhausen himself with the aid of Tony Dalton. Harryhausen and Dalton 2003 is a thorough chronological record of all of Harryhausen's work and includes discussions not only

of his animation techniques but also the wider context of fantasy movies. Two separate, and detailed, chapters are given over to *Jason and the Argonauts* and *The Clash of the Titans.* Harryhausen and Dalton 2005 is a beautifully illustrated compendium of original sketches, model work, and film stills chronicling Harryhausen's complete oeuvre; chapter 7 ("Zeus Complex") is given over to the films discussed here.

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The orthography deployed in this index for the most part reflects that deployed by the various contributors to the volume. Lemmata are supplied according to both the Latinate convention and the k-convention for the more important terms where the respective entries are widely separated, with appropriate cross-references between the two.

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